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THIS MAN ADAMS

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St. Patrick's Seminary
Menlo Park, California

DISCARD

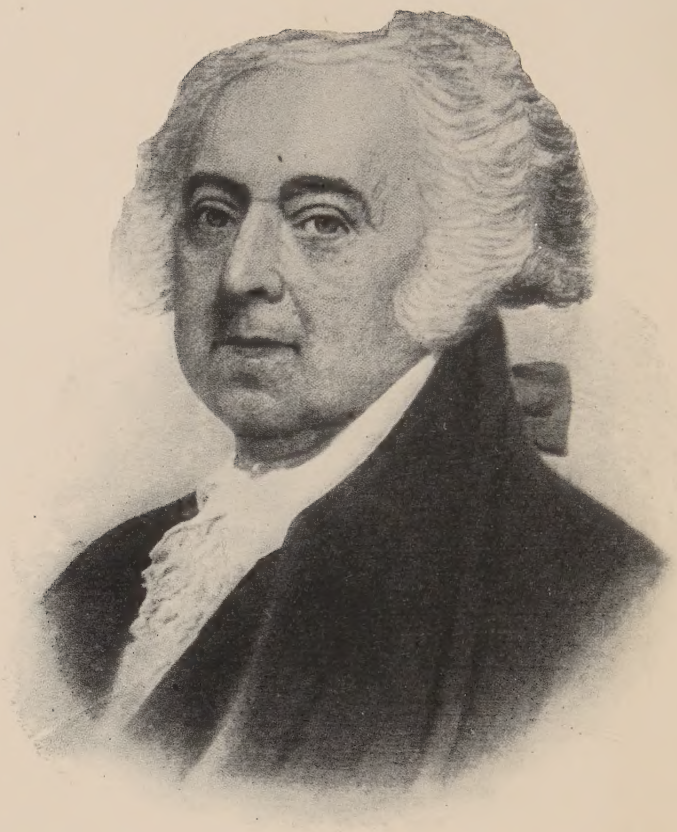


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THIS MAN ADAMS



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John Adams

This Man Adams

THE MAN WHO
NEVER DIED

Samuel McCoy

X10132

PUBLISHERS

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DISCARD

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To ,

PHILLIPS RUSSELL

***T**HIS book is for next year's children. For children still do retain some ability to weigh, on their merits, the assertions that the world makes to them. But grown people, never . . .*

As for the grown people, this book is merely to amuse. Heaven knows, it ought to amuse any grown person! If there are any.

S. M.

"After all, I am not dead"

JOHN ADAMS, in a letter to JOHN TAYLOR

"That the first want of man is his dinner, and the second his girl, were truths well known to every democrat and aristocrat long before the great philosopher Malthus arose, to think he enlightened the world by the discovery"

JOHN ADAMS, in a letter to JOHN TAYLOR

"Ye make also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago"

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One

BIRTHRIGHTS

ON BEING BORN — PERMANENTLY BORN

"The history of mankind, as far as we can trace it, is full of wonders, and the greatest wonder of 'all is: the total destruction of all the monuments and memorials by which we *could* have formed a correct and impartial judgment of characters and events. . . ."

John Adams to Thomas McKean

THIS MAN ADAMS fooled me, at first. Or, rather, I was as blind as one usually is, when meeting a person for the first time. I wasn't impressed. I saw in him only a plump, somewhat perky little man, no different from hundreds of others that one encounters and forgets.

He said nothing memorable at the moment—it was a dull party, as I recall, assembled by a hostess who had a genius for reducing her guests to bores—and he somehow drifted away in the crowd around the tea-table. I remember, too, that people sometimes asked me, in later years, if I had ever met the man—apropos of I don't know what. And on such occasions I would answer vaguely that I "believed I had. Something to do with tea, hadn't he? Or was that his second cousin, Sam, I was thinking of?" No matter!

And so it was not until, years later, when we had fallen permanently in love with the New England countryside—with its farmhouse, built before the Revolution, and with its sprays of blossoms, from apple-trees as old as the house, that resume their places in the little low-ceilinged rooms with the serenity of youth—it was not until then that I met this man Adams again and saw him as, I think, he really is.

To see him every day, as we do; to hear his racy, pungent talk; to be admitted to the rooms in which he lays aside his wig—for he does still appear in wig and knee-breeches, *in public*—and to behold him in one of his utterly delightful tantrums: these things daily cause me to bless my luck, my discovery that he is our nearest neighbor.

For it is quite by accident that I now encounter him. I hadn't, as I say, thought of him since that first momentary meeting, years before. I hadn't the faintest notion as to the identity of the chubby, erect little man who came strolling up our road the other day. He stopped, bowed with great dignity, and stood regarding the place with an extremely bright eye; somewhat, I thought, like a plump robin on the lawn . . .

"You are settling here, I take it, sir?" he inquired; and when I had admitted this, he observed, shaking his

head: "There is something very odd about this house of yours, sir, very odd! No one ever seems to stay in it long enough to get acquainted."

I expressed some surprise.

"No," he continued gravely, "they don't seem to stay. We *Adamses* have been here for some three hundred years. But I'm blessed if I know what's the matter with *this* house, sir. The man who built it occupied it only forty years! The next tenant stayed only a matter of thirty years. The family that bought it next hurried out after they had been in it no more than fifty years; and I don't believe that the man you bought it from lived in it a day longer than fifty years. No, sir, there's something very odd about it!"

I breathed a sigh of relief. We had been accustomed to the brief tenures of city apartments. "Your name is Adams, sir?" I asked.

He bowed. "John Adams," he said. "Your servant, sir."

We shook hands.

John Adams was born in the year 1735.

Do not hurry away from this remark. Let us savor it on the tongue a bit. Or at least that part of it comprised in the word "born" and the date "1735."

You and I were babies once, and, like billions of

other babies, have not had a particle of influence upon other people's thoughts. Our mothers laughed and cried over us, of course; but otherwise our individual births haven't the least, tiniest, faintest, most shadowy shred of significance in the general scheme of things.

And we might as well accept this fully.

Undoubtedly a baby was born in the African jungle, on a certain day, at a certain bush, in a wilderness a thousand miles wide, and undoubtedly his mother was delighted with him; but what that day was, or what that spot was, nobody knows now; and as for the baby himself, whom nobody ever heard of, he has left no more of a record than has the gray lizard on the rock.

That word "born" doesn't mean much after all.

Since the world began, not one person in a million has really been "born." The rest of us simply don't matter, may just as well never have existed.

We die, because we have never really been born.

(Dammit, why *do* we persist in being so careless with our names for things? *Why*, for instance, do we say so glibly that this soldier or that conqueror was "born"—when in reality he is no more alive than the rest of us? Why not think what you are saying, for once?)

BEING BORN—PERMANENTLY BORN

Just here, glancing from this window across the sunny field, I can see upon the gray flanks of a huge granite boulder the dark tracery of shadows from the branches of a tree; but ought I to say that those shadows were "born"? They will have moved away in half an hour . . . and upon that granite they will have left no trace.

We die, because we have never been born. My belief is that no one has detected the covert corollary in the words, "Except ye be born *again*," for if it had been noted more people would have resented it. That is to say, in effect, "ye have *never* been born." And quite right.

We die, because the charge of vitality within us as we emerge upon earth, fuzzy-topped, *cannot be ordered* in any desired quantity from the Dealer's service-station. We haven't any control over the amount delivered. It may suffice to drive us furiously, it may suffice to drive us sluggishly, it may last ten years, it may last seventy.

And all the while, the movement it produces is deceptive. It may appear to be life, but it usually isn't . . .

No, there is no better starting-place, none worth more study, than this word "born." A biography has never yet been written, and it is inconceivable that a

biography ever will be written. All the millions of volumes of biographies (including this one) are worthless; because they must, perforce, begin only with recorded facts; and the facts of birth, infancy, and first environment are not recorded, and, doubtless, never will be found recorded. The true factors that shape a man's life are too multitudinous and too shy ever to be observed. A king's biographer begins with the date on which that king ascended to the throne; but by that time the whole course of that king's reign has been decided: the significant facts which came before that date have escaped. Who knows what Lincoln's mother said to him in his cradle? Who could possibly have known that he was destined to be Abraham Lincoln, and have gathered up the *significant* facts of his infancy? The biographer can deal in anecdotes and in acts; that is all; he can never truly account for anything. . . .

For example: One of the startling things that John Adams says is that the American Revolution was all over by 1776. The schoolbooks tell us that is the year in which it began. This man Adams is perfectly right. As he explains, the cannon and the musketry that banged and sputtered away for the next seven years were *unimportant* when compared with what

BEING BORN—PERMANENTLY BORN

had already happened. . . . John Adams is alive, and the men who wrote the schoolbooks are dead.

And so we don't know how John Adams was born, and he cannot tell us. All that we know is that he is one of those few—those incredibly few—persons who are ever born.

One of the most delightful and exasperating occupations of the modern inventive engineer is the problem of producing power in requisite quantity from smaller and smaller engines. This was the problem of the airplane—an engine compact enough and light enough to be lifted by the plane while providing sufficient power. The engineer's success is amazing; but the compact power to be observed in new-born infants is far more startling, even if we haven't yet learned how to produce it ourselves.

What incredibly powerful hatreds glare from the eyes of that tiny morsel of flesh, as he doubles rose-petal fists and screams resentment of the whole world! We, adults, cannot duplicate that astounding violence unless we are drunk or crazed. . . . What amazing self-centering is visible in the challenging stare of that infant! What complete understanding of his own needs, and what complete absence of interest in the needs of any other living being! *I want my*

THIS MAN ADAMS

food! I want *my* sleep! I want *my* comfort! And, by my eternal God (which is Me!), *I'm* going to have it!

There it is: Energy, gigantic, ruthless, defying earth and the heavens, apparently proceeding from a control-box no bigger than an alarm clock, but baffling all efforts to trace it to its secret source; powerful enough to control the lightning or to affect the lives of countless millions of people; and all this contained, possibly, in a pin-point of matter. . . .

As one says, all this is observable in any baby whatsoever. And yet you very well know that not one in a million of these, even if he lives his full seventy years, finds this apparently exhaustless energy sufficient to have *effect* upon anyone except himself.

Imagine, consider, then—if it be possible—the torrential energy locked up in this redfaced infant who is destined to influence the world and to go on living, exuberantly, for centuries!

“John Adams was born in the year 1735.”

There's the question of his parents, anyone's parents—

You may, if you like, say that his parents were John Adams and Susanna Boylston Adams, both of English descent and both born in New England. Those

were their names. But this matter of parentage is a thing that has never been properly settled. Few indeed are the children who are wise enough to know either their own fathers or their own mothers. We cannot get much help from them in this direction, nor from the generations of biographers who have been glad to cover their own laziness under the cloak of the convenient word "destiny." "He was a child of Destiny." Who is this person, Destiny? Male or female? How many children have not lazily been ascribed to this amorphous parent, and how many, many uncharted forces do not go into making up that Protean and imaginary monster!

For the biologists have never yet been able to tell us why one child out of a brood will surpass his brothers and sisters, nor can the psychologist tell us why the parents who made one child notable could not make all their others equally remarkable. It has been hopefully said that Destiny is blind. But even this is flattering. There is no such thing as destiny. *No* force—and destiny, if it be conceived at all must be conceived as a force—is blind. The blindness exists, or is absent, only in those who seek to direct forces.

If it had not been for his son, John Adams's father would have remained a nobody. The same might be said of Joseph, the carpenter of Galilee. Any body

can be a father. Fathers are as common as chickweed. Nor is a dynamic force an uncommon thing in this universe. Ringtailed forces go howling up and down the streets in every direction. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The only *uncommon* thing is a man who can lay forcible hands on a force and direct it.

The chief trouble with most of us is that if we ever see a force coming we hurry into the house and keep the door shut till it goes by.

The observation gives natural birth to the reflection that parentage is hopelessly entangled in the whole business of fear. We are conceived in fear, suckled in fear, bred in fear. But fear is entirely the invention of adults. The malign Personage who decided that it would never do for men to become gods, and cast about for a method to retard them in their struggle to reach that objective, achieved his aim by inventing the subtle doctrine that it is wrong to be an egoist. All adults have solemnly agreed to promulgate this doctrine, by suasion and by force. But no thorough-going egoist knows what fear is. No newborn baby—and the baby is the sublimest of egoists—knows what fear is. He dies in his soul only because he learns too speedily what his elders teach him. . . .

The man who never dies is the man who laughs at the fears of his fathers.

In addition to Mr. Adams, senior, and Susanna Boylston, his wife, we must seek for other parents for the baby John. There were plenty, just as there are plenty for every child born today. So many, in fact, that the difficulty is one of elimination, not of collection. By no means were they, in John Adams's case, all of pure English blood. Some of his parentage—and here we are not at all referring to John and Susanna—is Italian. A great deal is that earlier form of Italian known as Roman. He has in him, too, a strong mixture of Jewish blood. Some of his parentage was Persian, a dark-skinned race remarkable for its sense of law. Some of it is Teutonic and Scandinavian and not a little of the blood in his veins is Greek. If you prefer to prove a case for what was once proudly called Nordic, you may reject all these admixtures and hug the pure English bodies of John and Susanna to your heart's content. But in that case take John and Susanna away with you; you are welcome to them; for what we are considering now is the parentage of men who never die—and by that we mean the parentage of their souls.

The indestructible part of man knows no "national

borders." His flesh knows them, but it is carnal, mortal, not worth remembering. Let us leave it to Death, who, for some obscure purpose of his own, desires it.

John Adams, like others, in his indestructible part is the son of that great Italian who stubbornly denied what everyone can plainly see, namely, that the earth is flat; who exasperated sensible people by this idiotic stubbornness to such a pitch that they very properly killed him. John Adams, in his indestructible part, is the son of that other great Italian who deliberately risked his life to prove, by actually making the crazy voyage, the truth of the other's insane assertion that you can reach the east by sailing west. What *mad* parents!

John Adams is also the son of those earlier Italians who called themselves Romans and who were so fanatical on the subject of LAW—stark, rigorous, undefilable, impartial, majestic LAW—that they would extend its august shelter, against the bloodthirsty howlings of a mob of Jewish priests, to a sorry misshapen little Roman Jew who stood otherwise helpless in the midst of that mob. Law. Law is a force, elemental and terrific in its strength. Who can throw a bridle over it, who can control its thunderous hooves?

John Adams's parentage! The farmer who nightly came home to his house in the village of Braintree from the fields where he had sweated through the day; and Susanna, his wife—these two are gone like shadows that drift across the face of a cliff. Did they ever live? Or, if they lived, what part of them became part of that squalling redfaced atom they called their son John?

Perhaps, although they are forgotten like the billions of men and women who die are forgotten, they, like those billions, were more godlike than those few whose names are remembered and who, we say, are immortal. They strove. Merely to live is to strive. Or, merely to strive is to live. Who shall say that all man boasts as his accomplishments outweighs the impalpable weight made up of the strivings of a million million unrecorded lives? Not hell, but heaven only, is paved with good intentions.

There is no Weigher, among men.

So, circling once again about this word "born," I gaze at the infant John Adams, lying there in his cradle in the oaken-timbered farmhouse in the village of Braintree in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and gaze at that pudgy pink head, if not in horror,

THIS MAN ADAMS

at least with agitation and awe. His mother, Susanna, remarks complacently, "What a darling!" But he is worse than that. He is a baby *who is not going to die*. . . .

Good God!

II

IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN EGOIST

YOU *cannot* do the things that John Adams did unless you are possessed of enormous vitality.

By this is not meant enormous physical strength. John Adams is no muscular giant. He is a little man, plump, almost rolypoly. All his life long he complains of illnesses, or, at least, of a recurrent physical condition which makes mental labor difficult. Nor does one have in mind his long span of years. The vitality which keeps a man going through ninety years is no doubt a powerful thing; but there have been a million such nonagenarians, and not one of them has had the sort of vigor that is imagined when one thinks of the vigor that was, or is, John Adams's.

The vitality that was born into that mite of humanity that came into the world on October 30, 1735, is beyond belief!

People didn't particularly notice it until this youngster was, let us say, twenty-five years old, or thereabout; and it took another fifteen years, on top of

the twenty-five, before the whole country noticed it. It has been there, though, from the very first squall for his milk.

And this is essential. You *have* to have that sort of vitality, if you're going to do big things. Where it comes from, how to acquire it, nobody knows. The recipe hasn't yet been fixed. But you've got to have this giant dose of energy bottled up inside of you, to start with, *somehow*. . . .

Its visible manifestation, in the case of all giants, is The Yell. You yell for what you want. You keep on yelling.

If you think over the lives of all giants among mankind, you see that this is true of them all. Even the quietest of them, the most gentle, the most meek. They *never* stop demanding what they want. They will go to prison, they will starve without a murmur, they will go to the gallows, to the stake, even to the cross—but they will never stop demanding what they want. . . .

Ordinary people—people who lack this sort of energy—are easily dissuaded from yelling for what they want. We don't think it's worth the trouble. We quit, and say, "Oh, well, I didn't want it much, anyway." That's because we are not burning up with this ter-

IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN EGOIST

rific force that makes one blind to everything except the object desired.

The object *desired*!

There's the secret! "John Adams *wants* this!" "This is *mine*!" "Mine!" "Don't you touch that! It's *mine*!" "Give me that—it's *mine*!"

And nothing on God's green earth is going to stop one of these *Me* men, these *Mine* men, these *Property* men, these *Possessions* men, these *My Rights* men, from getting what they desire. . . .

Luckily for us, a lot of them desire things which are a help to all of us. Mr. Columbus desires to know, by actual test, that the earth is round; and the earth herself can't stop him from finding out. Mr. Watt desires to know what can be done with steam; and the desire can't be bottled up successfully inside him, any more than you can bottle up steam in a locomotive. Steam is much weaker than Mr. Watt, much! And so with all of them. Go over the whole list and you will find that all of them will explode—if they aren't liberated.

Luckily for us, Mr. Adams yelled and howled for The Right to Keep What Belongs to You.

Yes, yelling for it, from the cradle till you get it, is the secret. But don't think, young man, that be-

coming a great man is as simple as all that. You'll find out differently, speedily enough. There's a trick in it. You have to know *how* to yell. . . .

And that takes work: a life-time of it.

One (almost) sure way in which to recognize a great man is to discover that he:

Keeps a Diary.

Americans don't keep diaries, as they once did. The habit has fallen out of fashion. This may account for the fact that there seems—seems, mind you—to be no Americans today who are as gigantic as those of a century ago. "Keep a diary!" is another of those recipes that is no recipe. It doesn't at all follow that anyone who keeps a diary is thereby assured of greatness. Few indeed of those countless thousands who kept diaries, back in the hoopskirt or crinoline days, ever became famous. They kept them, not because they couldn't help themselves from doing it, but because it was the fashion; and fashion never made greatness. But it's the sign of the great, nevertheless, to keep a diary.

The reason is, that your great man is invariably a Me man. He thinks about himself, constantly. He has to, if he's going to get anywhere. . . .

And so he puts down all his doubts and hopes and

IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN EGOIST

fears and dreams, on paper. He can't help doing it. The Force, the terrific *I want* force, inside him, drives him to it, inexorably.

Some Me-persons, of course, take it out in talking. These are not, as a rule, very big persons. Other people soon get tired of that brand of egoism. They sit on them—permanently, effectually.

But John Adams keeps a diary, and thereby testifies, with testimony beyond dispute, that he is a very great *Me* person. . . .

It would be far better for historians, brain-students, biographers, and what-not, if all great men were born with the ability to write at birth. . . . Then we would really know what to say about them. John Adams didn't begin his diary till he was nineteen. Those nineteen years, about which we have only one or two fragmentary bits of information, are most important. We would like to know just *when* he began wishing. . . .

All one needs, to become great, is a Wish that is sufficiently strong. Aye, but how are you to build up your Wish to the requisite strength? That's the riddle; that's the essential for which no infallible formula has yet been decreed!

THIS MAN ADAMS



“If wishes were horses,
Beggars might ride”—
Yes, but wishes *are* horses,
With seven-league stride!
They stand in the stable,
Great beasts full of fire,
Enormous, unbridled,
With eyes gleaming dire;
With the roll of the thunder
Their hooves paw the earth,
They loom in the darkness
And wait for the birth
Of the man who shall seize them,
Shall bridle, shall rein,
But all save the Beggar
Shall touch them in vain!
Yes, the Beggars shall ride them,
They only are kings,
They only may master
These terrible wings,
These implacable stallions
Whose hooves roar through the night,
Who breast the star-spaces,
Whom no power can fright,
Who are lords of all being,
All peoples, all things—
Yea, wishes *are* horses,
And beggars their kings!

IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN EGOIST

There is a little boy living in a village named Braintree, on the shore of Massachusetts Bay, ten miles southwest of Boston. From a hill-top near his father's house, he can see the roofs of Boston on a clear day. Boston is a town with only ten or fifteen thousand inhabitants. Braintree is a village of only two or three hundred inhabitants.

From the same hill-top the boy can see the sea—the salt bay, the blue water that opens into the blue Atlantic itself. Away off, too far to be seen, across that blue expanse, is an island, named England. These four things are all part of a pattern—the village, the town, the wide sea, the island called England—which makes up most of the little boy's life.

All his life long, the boy writes, writes voluminously. So incessantly does he scribble, diaries, letters, documents, speeches, heaven knows what not, that his *edited* writings fill ten enormous volumes, and no one knows how much more than this was written but not preserved in print. *Two million* words, written by his hand, are preserved; how many more, probably *ten million*, are not lost?

Now the curious thing is, that although the boy writes tirelessly about this village; and about the town of Boston; and about the island named England; and

even about the ships which sail the sea, yet, in all this two million words, he sets down hardly one reference to the sea itself, that tremendous expanse of water which has so vital a bearing on the village, the town, the island called England, and, most of all, upon the boy himself!

Why did he not? He wrote about everything else under the sun—why not about this? Was this the one vast force which he sensed too keenly? a thing so much like his own secret soul even to name? Restless, untameable, forever hungry, insatiable, a law to itself, proud, humble, secret and majestic—how much did that boy, gazing upon it every day of his life, come to feel its kinship with his own soul?

He does not tell us.

There is little, indeed, that is recorded about *any* phase of his boyhood. But, luckily, almost one hundred and fifty years after his own boyhood, the boy's great-grandson wrote a chapter which helps to fill that gap. Henry Adams, with a flash of illumination, as no one more fittingly could, "divined his great-grandfather's character from his own" boyhood. And this is his picture:

"Whatever was peculiar to him was education, not character, and came to him, directly and indirectly, as the result of that eighteenth-century inheritance

IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN EGOIST

which he took with his name. *The atmosphere in which he lived* was . . . revolutionary . . . as though he were steeped, from his greatest grandmother's birth, in the odor of political crime."

Thus you may picture the village, the daily talk in each of its scattered dwellings, and particularly the daily talk in the house in which the boy, Johnny Adams, lived.

"Resistance to something was the law of New England nature."

Henry Adams, describing himself, has once and for all described in these words the boyhood and the mainspring of the boy Johnny Adams.

"Resistance to something was the law of New England nature," the whole passage runs. "The boy looked out on the world with the instinct of resistance; for . . . generations his predecessors had viewed the world chiefly as a thing to be reformed, filled with evil forces to be abolished, and they saw no reason to suppose that they had wholly succeeded in the abolition; the duty was unchanged. Boys naturally look on all force as an enemy, and generally find it so, but the New Englander, whether boy or man, in his long struggle with a stingy or hostile universe, had learned also to love the pleasure of hating; his joys were few."

Just what it was that Johnny's father and Johnny's

mother, and the neighbors who came in to chat, used to talk about in those days we cannot exactly know, for there is little record. John himself is curiously silent about his father and mother, as he was silent about the sea. There is no question but that he profoundly loved them both. And yet, loving them though he did, he sees their mental limitations with clear eyes and sets this fact down with the frankness that marks all his acts through life. Though he said little else about them, he records in writing, when he is twenty-five, his conviction that they had retarded his education because they were *ignorant* of what was proper for him. "The ignorance of parents!" he cries. It is the perpetual cry of ambitious youth. But in *what* did they fail? There is no record. Probably, as may be judged from the same passage, because they were too indulgent to him and let him run practically wild—making little boats, hunting birds' nests, playing with bows and arrows, doing as he pleased. . . .

Have you let the solemn schoolbooks fool you into believing that the New England Puritan was a gloomy personage at all ages? What cruel falsehood! Do we youngsters of today think we are hotter blooded, more passionate? What nonsense! Here is little Johnny Adams, his two small brothers, and the neighbors' youngsters. *Passionate* little devils? Listen to Henry

Adams, in what is perhaps the most beautiful passage he ever wrote:

“Boys are wild animals, rich in the treasures of sense, but the New England boy had a wider range of emotions than boys of more equable climates. He felt his nature crudely, as was meant. To the boy . . . Adams, summer was drunken. Among senses, smell was the strongest—smell of hot pine-woods and sweet-fern in the scorching summer noon; of new-mown hay; of ploughed earth; of box hedges; of peaches, lilacs, syringas; of stables, barns, cow-yards; of salt water and low tide on the marshes; nothing came amiss. Next to smell came taste, and the children knew the taste of everything they saw or touched, from pennyroyal and flagroot to the shell of a pignut and the letters of a spelling-book—the taste of A-B, AB, suddenly revived on the boy’s tongue sixty years afterwards. Light, line, and color as sensual pleasures, came later and were crude as the rest. The New England light is glare, and the atmosphere harshens color. The boy was a full man before he ever knew what was meant by atmosphere; his idea of pleasure in light was the full glare of a New England sun. His idea of color was a peony, with the dew of early morning on its petals. The intense blue of the sea, as he saw it a mile or two away, from the

Quincy hills; the cumuli in a June afternoon sky; the strong reds and greens and purples of colored prints and children's picture-books, as the American colors then ran; these were ideals. The opposites or antipathies were the cold grays of November evenings, and the thick, muddy thaws of Boston winter; streets piled with six feet of snow in the middle; frosts that made the snow sing under wheels or runners. . . . After a January blizzard, the boy who could look with pleasure into the violent snow-glare of the cold white sunshine, with its intense light and shade, scarcely knew what was meant by tone. He could reach it only by education.

"Winter and summer, then, were two hostile lives, and bred two separate natures. Winter was always the effort to live; summer was tropical license. Whether the children rolled in the grass, or waded in the brook, or swam in the salt ocean, or sailed in the bay, or fished for smelts in the creeks, or netted minnows in the salt-marshes, or took to the pine-woods and the granite quarries, or chased muskrats and hunted snapping-turtles in the swamps, or mushrooms or nuts on the autumn hills, summer and country were always sensual living, while winter was always compulsory learning. Summer was the multiplicity of nature; winter was school.

IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN EGOIST

"The bearing of the two seasons on the education of . . . Adams was no fancy; it was the most decisive force he ever knew."

Passionate Puritan!

Of this boyhood, let us add the extract from John's letter to Benjamin Waterhouse:

"Tobacco, I have found from long Experience, having learned the Use of it upon Ponds of Ice, when skaiting with Boys at eight years of age"—

And the extract from his Autobiography:

"Here it may be proper to recollect something which makes an article of great importance in the life of every man. I was of an amorous disposition, and, very early, from ten or eleven years of age, was very fond of the society of females. I had my favorites among the young women, and spent many of my evenings in their company"—

This boy is perfectly self-possessed. He returns stare for stare with little girls. He displays, for their impressing, his accomplishments upon Ponds of Ice. They are awed. He may pick and choose. He, aged ten, "has his favorites" among these "young women," aged eight!

When this priceless brat is seven years old, Indians are still plentiful in Massachusetts, though the colony has been more or less settled for a hundred years. The

Punkapaug and the Neponset tribes, or their remnants, lived in the vicinity. Their priest, Aaron Pomham, and their king, Moses Pomham, as the settlers had dubbed them, "were frequent visitors at my father's house," says Johnny. "I have a distinct remembrance of their forms and figures. They were very aged, and the tallest and stoutest Indians I have ever seen." Undoubtedly, to the goggling seven-year-old boy, they looked indeed gigantic. "There was a numerous family in this town, whose wigwam was within a mile of our house. This family were frequently at my father's house, and I, in my boyish rambles, used to call at their wigwam, where I never failed to be treated with whortleberries, blackberries, strawberries, or apples, plums, peaches, and so forth, for they had planted a variety of fruit trees about them."

The reminiscence is without significance, save to establish the flavor of frontier life still existing in the American colonies, at that day, and to contrast the receding savage, in his feeble, futile efforts to retain a foothold on his old hunting-grounds, with the Englishman and his unshakable hold on property. The small boy, seven years old, chubby and brown and round-eyed with wonder, who stands there in his mother's kitchen gazing at the tall forms of the chieftains, is stronger than they. He, like all the Me-per-

sons, is going to get what he wants, what he must have, and what he will hold on to . . .

"I have felt a commiseration for the Indians, from my childhood," he says, from these serene heights.

Another incident of his childhood—perhaps the *only* other one that he records, among all those two million words in his handwriting—is much more significant. A beggar stops one day at the kitchen door, to beg a bite to eat, when Johnny is ten. When he is eighty, he still remembers what the beggar says. It has stuck in John's mind for seventy years.

"The world is very unequally divided," says he. "But I do not wonder at that, nor think much of it. Because I know that if it were equally divided today, in one month there would be as great odds as ever."

And he cheerfully wipes charity's crumbs from his mouth and sets off once more, leaving the strange little ten-year-old gazing thoughtfully after him.

What is *mine*? What is *yours*? Can I get *mine*? Can I keep *mine*? Who are the bad men who are going to try to take *mine* away from me? How can you and I, and all the rest of us, stop them?

Yes, you are entitled to see in this small boy, at this moment, the terrific power of the Me-and-Mine, gathering itself together for its long fight. How terrific is that vitality! and how essential!

WHAT A QUEER THING THE MIND IS!

THIS hot-blooded boy is, exactly like the average American of today, an intensely nervous individual. You may not think it, to look at his rosy, rubicund, phlegmatic countenance, but nervous he undoubtedly is. He himself asserts that he has a "morbid" irritability of nerves.

"I am as cheerful as I ever was," he writes, at seventy-seven, to his old friend Thomas McKean, "and my health is as good, excepting a *quivering* of the hands, which disables me from writing in the bold and steady character of *your* letter, which I rejoice to see. Excuse the word 'quivering,' which, though I borrowed it from an Irish boy, I think an improvement in our language worthy a place in Webster's dictionary.

"Though my sight is good, my eyes are too weak for all the labor I require of them; but as this is a defect of more than fifty years standing (*i. e.*, from the time he was twenty-five, or dating probably as the result of ten years of constant reading, from the time

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he entered college till his admission to the Bar) there are no hopes of relief. . . .

"The trepidation of the hands, arising from a delicacy, or, if you will, a morbid irritability of nerves, has shown itself at times *for more than half a century*, but has increased for four or five years past, so as to extinguish all hopes that it will ever be less."

His great-grandson maintained that one Adams "possessed the only perfectly balanced mind that ever existed in the name." This one was, he said, Charles Francis Adams. Must it be inferred from this, that Henry Adams regarded his great-grandfather, John, as *not* perfectly balanced? He referred to him as "turbulent."

The world has *never* suffered so much evil from turbulent people, as from cold-blooded ones. . . . John Adams's blood ran hot.

But nervous he undoubtedly is, precisely as any other modern American.

There is no imaginable way of ascertaining, at this date, just how much of his nervousness is linked with what he called his "amorous" nature. He asserts that he "controlled" it for seven years after he had entered college (that is, from the age of sixteen to the age of twenty-three) but that this amorous disposition then "returned, and engaged me too much, till

I was married." He is married just as he reaches his thirtieth birthday. He must have known his bride since childhood—her family and his had long been mutual friends, and lived in neighboring villages—but it is probable that he did not single her out from among all his numerous "young women" until he was twenty-three. His grandson finds John's first allusion to her to be in a note written when he was twenty-six. Her name was Abigail Smith. In this note he refers to her as "Mrs. Nabby," and to himself as "Jack." The note leads one to suspect that he is already deep in love with her, but that he has not yet announced his love to her; and other evidence, elsewhere, prompts the belief that she has already been his "favorite" for three years before. The seven years following his twenty-third birthday, during which, as he says, his amorous nature plagued him "too much," are apparently seven years in which he was plagued, not by thoughts of *many* maidens, but of this one, only. Of all those who preceded her he says, sturdily:

"I shall draw no characters, nor give any enumeration of my youthful flames. It would be considered no compliment to the dead or the living. But this I will say: they were all modest and virtuous girls, and always maintained their character through life. . . . No virgin or matron ever had cause to blush at the

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sight of me, or to regret her acquaintance with me. No father, brother, son, or friend, ever had cause of grief or resentment for any intercourse between me and any daughter, sister, mother, or any other relation of the female sex. These reflections, to me consolatory beyond all expression, I am able to make with truth and sincerity; and I presume I am indebted for this blessing to my education. This has been rendered the more precious to me, as I have seen enough of the effects of a different practice. Corroding reflections through life are the never failing consequences of illicit amours. . . .”

Eight or nine years before his marriage, when he has not yet reached his twenty-first birthday, he exclaims:

“Let others waste their bloom of life at the card or billiard table among rakes and fools, and, when their minds are sufficiently fretted with losses and inflamed with wine, ramble through the streets assaulting innocent people, breaking windows, or debauching young girls. . . . Methinks I hear you say, ‘This is odd talk for John Adams!’ I’ll tell you, then, the occasion of it: About four months since, a poor girl in this neighborhood, walking by the meeting-house upon some occasion in the evening, met a fine gentleman with laced hat and waistcoat, and a sword, who



solicited her to turn aside with him into the horse stable. The girl relucted a little, upon which he gave her three guineas, and wished he might be damned if he did not have her in three months. Into the horse stable they went. The three guineas proved three farthings, and the girl proved with child, without a friend on earth that will own her, or knowing the father of her three-farthing bastard. . . .”

And for these eight or nine years he has sturdily controlled his “amorous disposition” though it constantly troubles him. There never yet was a great man who was not hot blooded.

If a man who is keenly sensitive to sensual impressions, even though he controls his reactions to them, can be called a sensualist, there has never been any man more of a sensualist than John Adams. He is as finely strung to his senses as a poet. “*I am thrown into a kind of transport* when I behold the amazing concave of heaven, sprinkled and glittering with stars,” he writes when he is twenty-one, in a sacred letter to his closest friend. And of the vibrations of music in the air, he confesses that they produce in him sensations of pleasure so intense that it is “all that the organs of his body can bear.”

“Have you read my friend Benjamin Rush’s book,” inquires Mr. Adams, “on the diseases of the mind? I

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know not whether he has enumerated *all* the Dis-tempers of the Intellect!

"It seems to me that *every* excess—of passion, prejudice, appetite; of love, fear, jealousy, envy, revenge, avarice, ambition; every revery and vagary of imagination; the Fairy Tales, the Arabian Nights, in short, almost all poetry and *all oratory*; every *écart*, every deviation from pure, logical, mathematical Reason—may in some sense be called a disease of the mind."

This is an astonishing passage indeed, to have been written in 1813. It is modern to the last degree. In one instant it removes Adams from the ranks of those who have died with their century and makes him alive today. It is uncanny. . . .

Of his own fits of temper, which are famous (and utterly charming), he confesses: "My temper in general has been tranquil . . . except when any instance of extraordinary madness, deceit, hypocrisy, ingratitude, treachery or perfidy, has suddenly struck me. Then I have always been irascible enough; and in three or four instances, very extraordinary ones, too much so . . . The storm, however, never lasted for half an hour, and anger never rested in the bosom."

"His anger," says his grandson, "when thoroughly roused, was, for a time, extremely violent. . . . Mr.

Adams was very impatient of cant, *or of opposition to any of his deeply established convictions*. Neither was his indignation at all graduated to the character of the individuals who might happen to excite it. It had little respect for persons, and would hold an illiterate man, or a raw boy to as heavy a responsibility for uttering a crude heresy as the strongest thinker or the most profound scholar."

For example—a serious accident once nearly occurred, when his coachman (who had been permitted by Mrs. Adams to take the carriage out) lost control of the horses. "I scolded at the coachman first, and afterwards at his mistress; and I will scold again and again; *it is my duty*."

After a ramble through the vast parks of English noblemen's estates and observing the summer-houses or "temples" scattered about them, he remarks with dry humor, "The temples to Bacchus and Venus are quite unnecessary, as mankind have no need for artificial incitement to such amusements." . . .

As well a person of "amorous disposition" might know!

He is for years at a time alone in France and England, without his wife; constantly, nightly, during all these years of separation from her he meets the brilliant, beautiful, sophisticated women of the

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two capitals, Paris and London; but, as he says sturdily, at the age of seventy-six, "Among all the errors, follies, failings, vices, and crimes, which have been so plentifully imputed to me, I cannot recollect a single insinuation against me of any amorous intrigue, or irregular or immoral connection with woman, single or married, myself 'a bachelor or a married man.'"

With a chuckle, he adds a footnote to this assertion: "Oh, yes, I had forgot the story of the four English girls whom General Pinckney was employed to hire in England, two for me and two for himself!"

Lovable, good, sturdy, passionate, *cool-headed* heart!

That Diary of his, commenced when he was nineteen, is a treasure. One thing it certainly does—it reveals the ceaseless introspection that is the hallmark of the great Me-person.

Listen to these entries:

1756. *Aged twenty one.*

February 11. I am constantly forming, *but never executing*, good resolutions. . . .

February 16. Ah, that I could conquer my natural pride and self-conceit!

THIS MAN ADAMS

February 24. I find myself very much inclined to an unreasonable absence of mind, and to a morose and unsociable disposition; let it therefore be my constant endeavor to correct these great faults.

March 23. I am dull and inactive, and all my resolutions, all the spirits I can muster, are insufficient to rouse me from this senseless torpitude. My brains seem constantly in as great confusion and disorder as Milton's Chaos; they are numb, dead. I have never any bright, refulgent ideas. Everything appears in my mind dim and obscure, like objects seen through a dirty glass or roiled water.

March 24. All my time seems to roll away unnoticed. I long to study sometimes, but have no opportunity. I long to be a master of Greek and Latin. I long to prosecute the mathematical and philosophical sciences. I long to know a little of ethics and moral philosophy. But I have no books, no time, no friends. I must therefore be contented to live and die an ignorant, obscure fellow.

May 1. Vanity, I am sensible, is my cardinal vice and cardinal folly.

May 12. Rambled about all day, gaping and gazing.

May 14. Not one new idea all this week.

June 5. Dreamed away the afternoon.

July 21. I am resolved to rise with the sun and to study . . .

July 22. Rose not until seven o'clock. This is the usual fate of my resolutions.

July 30. Dreamed away the time.

August 1. The greatest part of the last fortnight I have dreamed as usual.

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August 7. I know not by what fatality it happens, but I seem to have a necessity upon me of trifling away my time.

August 12. I know not what became of these days.

August 14. I seem to have lost sight of the object that I resolved to pursue. Dreams and slumbers, sloth and negligence, will be the ruin of my schemes.

1758. Aged twenty two.

October 5. I have smoked, chatted, trifled, loitered away this whole day almost.

October 17. I have not spirits and presence of mind enough to seek out scenes of observation and to watch critically the air, countenances, actions, and speeches of old men and young men, of old women and young girls, of physicians and priests, old maids and bachelors. I should chatter with a girl, and watch her behavior, her answers to questions, the workings of vanity, and other passions in her breast. But objects before me do not suggest proper questions to ask and proper observations to make; so dull and confused at present is my mind.

October 27-30. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday—all spent in absolute idleness, or, which is worse, gallanting the girls.

1759. Aged twenty three.

January 3. I am very thankful (for rebuffs). *Good* treatment makes me think I am admired, beloved, and my own vanity will be indulged in me; so I dismiss my guard,

and grow weak, silly, vain, conceited, ostentatious. But a check, a frown, a sneer, a sarcasm, rouses my spirits, makes me more careful and considerate. It may, in short, be made a question, whether good treatment or bad is the best for me; that is, whether smiles, kind words, respectful actions, do not betray me into weaknesses and littleness that frowns, satirical speeches, and contemptuous behavior make me avoid.

. . . Let Virtue address me: "Let no trifling diversion, or amusement, or company, decoy you from your book; that is, let no girl, no gun, no cards, no flutes, no violins, no dress, no tobacco, no laziness, decoy you from your books." By the way, laziness, languor, inattention, are my bane. I am too lazy to rise early and make a fire; and when my fire is made, at ten o'clock my passion for knowledge, fame, fortune, for any good, is too languid to make me apply with spirit to my books, and by reason of my inattention my mind is liable to be called off from law by a girl, a pipe, a poem, a love-letter, a play, &c., &c. . . . What am I doing? Shall I sleep away my whole seventy years? no, by everything I swear I will renounce this contemplative, and betake myself to an active, roving life by sea or land, or else I will attempt some uncommon, unexpected enterprise in law; let me lay the plan, and arouse spirit enough to push boldly! I swear I will *push* myself into business; I'll watch my opportunity to speak in court, and will strike with surprise—surprise bench, bar, jury, auditors and all. Activity, boldness, forwardness, will draw attention. I'll *not* lean with my elbows on the table forever!

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But I will not confine myself to a law-chamber for nothing—I'll have some boon in return, exchange; fame, fortune, or *something*!

. . . Here are two nights and one day and a half spent in a softening, enervating, dissipating series of hustling, prattling poetry, love, courtship, marriage; during all this time I was seduced into the course of unmanly pleasures that Vice describes to Hercules in the fable . . . I don't see clearly the objects that I am after; they are often out of sight; motes, atoms, feathers, are blown into my eyes and blind me. Who can see distinctly the course he is to take and the objects that he pursues, when in the midst of a whirlwind of dust, straws, atoms, and feathers? . . . *I'd* rather be lost in a whirlwind of activity, study, business, great and good designs of promoting the honor, grandeur, wealth, happiness of mankind . . .

February 11. I have been in Worcester a week this night. How much have I improved my health or my mind in this space? I have exercised little; eaten, and drank, and slept intemperately.

March 18. I never spent a whole day upon one book in my life.

What is the reason that I cannot remove all papers and books from my table, take one volume into my hands and read it, and reflect upon it till night, without wishing for my pen and ink to write a letter, or take down any other book, or think of the girls? Because I can't command my attention. My thoughts are roving from girls to friends, from friends to court, to Worcester, to Newbury, and

then to Greece and Rome, then to law; from poetry to oratory, and law. Oh! a rambling imagination!

. . . Now let me collect my thoughts, which have long been scattered among girls, father, mother, grandmother, brothers, matrimony, hustling, chat, provisions, clothing, fuel, servants for a family; and apply them with steady resolution and an aspiring spirit to the prosecution of my studies.

1760. Aged twenty-four.

May 28. Loitered the forenoon away upon a question in arithmetic.

May 29. Rose and breakfasted. Have done nothing yet today, and God only knows what I shall do!

May 31. Ran over the past passages of my life: little boats, water mills, windmills, whirligigs, birds' eggs, bows and arrows, guns, singing, pricking tunes, girls, &c. *ignorance of parents, masters, and tutors* . . . By a constant dissipation among amusements in my childhood, and by the ignorance of my instructors in the more advanced years of my youth, my mind has laid uncultivated; so that, at twenty-five, I am obliged to study Horace and Homer!

June 2. Wasted the day with a magazine in my hand. It seemed absurd to study.

June 3. *This* day has been lost in much the same spiritless manner.

June 5. Arose late. Eight o'clock, three and a half hours after sunrise, is a sluggard's rising time; it is a stupid waste of so much time; it is getting a habit hard to conquer, and

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it is very hurtful to one's health; three and a half, one-seventh of the twenty-four, is thus spiritlessly dozed away! God grant me attention to remark and a resolution to pursue every opportunity for the improvement of my mind, and to save, with the parsimony of a miser, every moment of my time!

June 6. Arose very late.

June 7. Arose late again.

November 14. Another year is now gone, and upon recollection I find I have executed none of my plans of study . . . Most of my time has been spent in rambling and dissipation . . . I think it is high time for a reformation. . . .

1761. In his twenty-sixth year.

January 8. Last Monday had a passionate wrangle with Eben Thayer, before Major Crosby. He called me *a petty lawyer*. *This I resented.*

By now, he well knows that he is great. If others don't know his inner thoughts, they are the blind.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

BUT of course the boy was being too severe on his
Myself, in all these entries that cry out upon his
"indolence" and his "idling."

For the entries between these self-critical ones show that he is actually working fiercely, driving himself without mercy; or, rather, *not* driving, but, like a colt running through green pastures for sheer delight, he is daily running breathlessly through the pasturage of a thousand knotty books. He talks, solemnly, about his *duty* to study; but it is plain that he is not working thus tirelessly because of any pious compunctions: it is perfectly obvious that he works thus ravenously *because he cannot help himself*; that terrific Birth-force drives him on, like a fire. He is a young colt, delighting in his strength. He enumerates, in a letter written when twenty, the various delights he has from his senses, taking inventory of them with joy, like a bride in a new house, and places, at the top of the glittering heap, the ecstasy he finds in exercising his brain. What joy, to let it gallop through the whole green world!

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The number of books that he reads (if one considers only those that he names, let alone those unnamed) is incredible. From most of them he copies out long passages which impress him, copying them for the double reason that he has not the money to buy these books for himself and because the slow, arduous exercise will fix the thought in his mind. He fills whole books with these patient transcriptions.

Actually, he is *busy* for sixteen hours a day, through all the years that follow his fifteenth. You may deduct his hours for eating and sleeping and still have left *four hundred thousand hours* which he actually utilizes up to the hilt—because he cannot help himself, from thus filling them. One might well tell the whole story of John Adams in these sixteen words:

Reading, reading, reading, reading!

Thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking!

Arguing, arguing, arguing, arguing!

Writing, writing, writing, writing!

A hundred thousand hours devoted to each of these four things! At the fourth, writing, he puts down on paper, in the course of seventy-five years, *not less* than ten million words. . . . Scarcely a day, in all that time, went by in which he does not write at least

three hundred words; on some days he wrote several thousand, in longhand, of course, be it remembered! It is staggering. . . .

Was it easy? "The manual exercise of writing," he records, even before he is fifty years old, "was painful and distressing to me—*almost like a blow on the elbow or the knee.*"

But he keeps on at it. Ten million words, in spite of acute distress. This is the Energy with which he was equipped at birth. . . .

"I have been," says he to Jefferson, whom he knew to be an omnivorous reader, "a diligent student for many years in books whose titles you have never seen."

"Under my first schoolmaster—who was a churl," he says in an autobiographical note, "in the public latin school in the town of Braintree, I spent my time in shooting, skating, swimming, flying kites, and every other boyish exercise and diversion I could invent. (Never mischievous.) Under my second master, who was kind, I began to love my books and neglect my sports. From that time on I have been *too* studious. . . ."

He is then about fourteen years old. It is the critical period of adolescence. He had been, up to then, "of an amorous disposition." Suddenly he trans-

fers his amours—from little girls to big books. Into them, the big books, he pours the whole flood of his hot, lusty nature from that time on. If his wife ever had cause to be jealous, she would have been obliged to name a thousand dusty law-books as co-respondents. These were his mistresses. . . .

When he is sixteen, he is sent to Harvard College. There are twenty-four young fellows in the class. One of them was Sam Locke, who afterward became President of Harvard. Another was Moses Hemmenway, who later attained distinction as a clergyman. These three, Locke, Hemmenway, and Adams, earned the reputation of being the three leading scholars in the class. But in his four years there, in addition to hard study, there are gallons of hard cider. The evenings are jolly enough, and exciting enough, in the arguments which the youngsters have in their rooms over all sorts of knotty questions. John's mind has a glorious time of it, in those four years, feeling its strength for the first time. He cavorted, a joyous colt, through the classics, history, and whatever science was taught at the time.

When he is nineteen, he is graduated, with the Class of 1755. A clergyman from Worcester, sixty miles away, comes to the graduation ceremonies. He is struck by the address delivered, in Latin, by young

John, as one of the honor students. Worcester needs a teacher for its grammar school; and young Adams is promptly engaged, three weeks after Commencement.

They send a groom over, leading a saddle-horse, to escort him to his first job. They ride the sixty miles in one day.

Harvard is ten miles from the village of Braintree. Worcester is sixty. The boy's travels have begun.

From his boyhood, the family have been hoping, rather fondly, that John will become a minister. Ministers are looked up to, in this New England. And the boy dutifully reads volume after volume of sermons and theological treatises, in preparation for this life-work.

But he can't stomach it. The more he reads, and the more he listens to sermons, and the more he observes the bitterness of theological disputes, the less taste he has for religion as exemplified by Calvinistic clergymen of the day, and the more repugnance he has toward the idea of becoming one of them himself.

Here is his own description of the poor youngster's worries at this time:

"Between the years 1751, when I entered, and 1754 (1755), when I left college, a controversy was car-

ried on between the minister of our parish and some of his people, partly on account of his theological principles, which were called Arminian, and partly on account of his conduct, which was too gay and light, if not immoral. Ecclesiastical councils were called, and sat in my father's house." (You may picture the youngster, listening round-eyed to the elders' bitter arguments.) "Parties and their acrimonies arose in the church and controversies in the press. I read all these pamphlets and many other writings on the same subjects, and found myself involved in difficulties beyond my powers of decision. At the same time, I saw such a spirit of dogmatism and bigotry in clergy and laity, that, if I should become a priest I must choose my side, and pronounce as positively as any of them, or never get a parish, or, getting it, must soon leave it. Very strong doubts arose in my mind, whether I was made for a pulpit in such times, and I began to think of other professions. I perceived very strongly, as I thought, that the study of theology and the pursuit of it, as a profession, would involve me in endless altercations, and make my life miserable. . . .

"The last two years of my residence at college produced a club of students who invited me to become one of them. (I have always believed that the al-

most universal health among the students, during the four years I passed at college, was to be ascribed, next to early rising and beef and mutton pies at commons, to the free use of cider and the very moderate use of wine and ardent spirit. When our barrels and bottles in the cellar were empty, we used to get it at the Buttery, where we kept an account; and I shall never forget how refreshing and salubrious we found it, *hard* as it often was.) Their plan was to spend their evenings together in reading any new publications, or any poetry or dramatic compositions that might fall in their way.

"I was as often requested to read, at their meetings, as any other, especially tragedies, and it was whispered to me and circulated among others that I had some faculty for public speaking and that I should make a better lawyer than clergyman. This last idea was easily understood and embraced by me. My inclination was soon fixed upon the law.

"But my judgment was not so easily determined. There were many difficulties in the way. Although my father's general expectation was that I should be a divine, I knew him to be a man of so thoughtful and considerate turn of mind, to be possessed of so much candor and moderation, that it would not be difficult to remove any objections he might make

. . . My mother, although a pious woman, I knew had no partiality for the life of a clergyman. But I had uncles and other relations, full of the most illiberal prejudices against the law as a profession. I had, indeed, a proper affection and veneration for them, but as I was under no obligation of gratitude to them, which could give them any color of authority to prescribe a course of life to me, I thought little of their opinions.

“But other obstacles more serious than these presented themselves. A lawyer must have a fee for taking me into his office as a student. I must be boarded and clothed for several years. I had no money; and my father, having three sons, had done as much for me in the expenses of my education as his estate and circumstances (he was a small farmer) could justify, and as my reason of my honor would allow me to ask. I therefore gave out that I would take a school, and took my degree at college undetermined whether I should study divinity, law, or science.”

Then comes his appointment to teach the little school in Worcester. He got lodgings in the home of a physician, read a good deal in the doctor's medical library, and “entertained many thoughts of becoming a physician and a surgeon.” But these thoughts were not serious, as he always had, he says, “an aversion to

sick rooms, and no fondness for rising at all hours of the night to attend patients."

For the first three months—the autumn of 1755—he faithfully keeps on reading away at sermons and theological works. But the bigotry of churches and churchmen continually revolted the boy. He breaks out, again in his diary, with expressions of disgust at the Calvinistic theory of Original Sin and Predestination. He admires Dr. Mayhew, a great clergyman, who is accused of Arminianism, of denying the divinity of Christ; and the boy whispers in a letter to a young friend, "there is a story about town that I am an Arminian!"

Good gracious!

"As far as I can observe," he writes to the same chum, hotly, "people are not disposed to inquire for piety, integrity, good sense, or learning in a young preacher, but for stupidity. . . . Could you advise me, then, who you know have not the highest opinion of what is called orthodoxy, to engage in such a profession?"

Nor is he overly well content with his job as a schoolmaster. His pupils seemed to him "a large number of little runtlings, just capable of lisping A B C, and troubling the master." He must have suffered acutely with the brats.

The poor young fellow's troubled state of mind at this period, the most painful in life, as well as the most ecstatic, is described in his own words:

"I was like a boy in a country fair, in a wilderness, in a strange country, with half a dozen roads before him, groping in a dark night. I had first resolved to study for the ministry, but other pursuits attracted me as well—farming, mercantile business, law, *and, above all, war*. . . . Nothing but the lack of influential friends and patronage prevented me from enlisting in the British army. Could I have obtained command of a troop of horse or a company of foot, I should infallibly have been a soldier. . . . *It is a problem in my mind, to this day, whether I should have been a coward or a hero.*"

Amuse yourself by speculating on the course of American history if circumstances had not thwarted this particular ambition of his. . . .

But at some time during these first three or four months in Worcester, he meets a gentleman who profoundly influences his life—Colonel James Putnam, a lawyer. Beginning in February, 1756, the young man's diary is full of allusions to this Colonel Putnam. "Spent the evening very sociably at Mr. Putnam's." "Drank tea with the Colonel and his lady." "Went a-shooting with Mr. Putnam." "Drank tea and spent

the evening at Mr. Putnam's." The acquaintance ripens fast and firm: it is easy to see that the youth is immensely impressed by the older man.

And what sort of a man is this Mr. Putnam? Not so orthodox, we're afraid. A man to cause grave shakings of Calvinistic heads. He has serious doubts about the miracles in the Bible. He thinks the apostles no more reliable than "a company of enthusiasts." "He says we have only *their* word to prove that they spoke with different tongues, raised the dead, and healed the sick, &c." And yet the youthful schoolmaster is so enthralled by this dangerous fellow that he gets permission from the school trustees to change his lodging from the Doctor's to Colonel Putnam's! Once there, "at breakfast, dinner and tea, Mr. Putnam was commonly disputing with me upon some question of religion. He had been intimate with one Peasley Collins, who had been to Europe, and came back a disbeliever of every thing; fully satisfied that religion was a cheat, a cunning invention of priests and politicians; that there would be no future state, any more than there is at present any moral government. . . ." Putnam, says John, could not go quite as far as this blackguard Peasley Collins; but he was plainly tainted with heresies and did his best to get the admiring young lodger confused.

"April 29. Fast Day; heard Mr. Maccarty preach at prayer-meeting; spent the evening at Mr. Putnam's." Whip-sawed.

The law-court holds its sessions in Worcester in May and the young fellow attends them, in company with his lawyer-friend, Colonel Putnam, is enthralled by the arguments and the business of the courtroom, and even—blushing bashfully—is introduced to some of the great lawyers in attendance! "As I boarded in his family, I had opportunities of conversing with all the judges, lawyers, and others of the principal characters of the Province, and heard their speculations upon public affairs. This was highly delightful to me." . . . "All the conversation I have had since I left Braintree is dry disputes about politics and rural obscene wit."

By August, his ruin is complete. He cannot think of church politics and Calvinistic doctrines except as "frightful." They "never failed to terrify me exceedingly." The diabolical Mr. Putnam chuckles in triumph. Because:

On August 21, 1756, young John Adams signs an agreement with Mr. Putnam to study law under his instruction for two years while continuing to teach school.

The young man breathes a deep sigh of relief. His

life-work is decided upon; and it is *not* going to be that of a clergyman.

"August 23. Monday. Came to Mr. Putnam's and began law, and studied not very closely this week."

"In 1758, my period with Mr. Putnam expired. Two gentlemen visited me in the office and invited me to settle in Worcester; they said I might depend upon business in my profession. . . . But my answer was, I was in very ill health; and the air of Worcester appeared to be unfriendly to me to such a degree that I panted for want of the breezes from the sea; that my father and mother invited me to live with them; and, as there never had been a lawyer in any country part of the then county of Suffolk (which included Boston and his native village, Braintree) I was determined at least to look into it and see if there was any chance for me. They replied that the town of Boston was *full* of lawyers"—and so on.

But the stubborn youth went on home.

He arrived home on the fourth of October. For nine days he dawdled happily around the farm in the golden October weather, a season that makes New England lovelier than any place on earth, a world of dazzling blue sea, dazzling blue sky; the whole landscape a regal pomp of gold and crimson. He was like

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a lad home from college on a holiday. He would pick up a book of law only to let it fall listless from his hands. He smoked a pipe. He lounged over to the farmhouse next door, ten steps away, which his father owned, and spent hours talking to Dr. Savil's wife. She must have been pretty. He read Ovid's *Art of Love* aloud to her. He rides up to Boston, ten miles away, for the day, chatting merrily with three lads of his own age; but the conversation of one of them is so lofty that John has a pang of self-derogation: "*This* fellow's thoughts," he scribbles in his diary, "are not employed on songs and girls, nor *his* time on flutes, fiddles, concerts, and card tables; *he* will make something!"

But on the evening of the ninth day, Friday the Thirteenth of October, he gets down to work. He takes a hand in what is to be *his first law case*. . . .

He has strolled over to Colonel Samuel Quincy's house in the village to hear this case. Colonel Quincy is a justice of the peace. And this is the vast, majestic issue involved:

Luke Lambert and Josh Field, neighbors in the village, are having one of their frequent rows. Young Adams hasn't much use for Luke. "Lambert sets up for a wit and a humorist," he says. "He is like a little, knurly, ill-natured horse, that kicks at every horse

of his own size, and sheers off from every one that is larger. I must be careful what I say before him, for he is always watching for wry words to make into a droll story to laugh at." And Josh Field is not much better. He is hotheaded and profane. They are a typical couple of village Yankees.

Luke owns a couple of horses, as ornery as himself. They get over a stone wall into one of Josh's pasture-lots one day and enjoy themselves there. Josh boils out of his house when he catches sight of them, manages to get them cornered, and leads them off in triumph to the village pound. Luke hunts in vain for them all day till his temper is frazzled. Finally Josh marches over and crows. "Go down to the pound," he yells over the fence, "if you want your gol-danged horses!" Luke goes and gets them; but to do so he has to pay the poundkeeper the regular fee. What he thinks of Josh will not bear printing.

And now one of these pesky horses has got into Josh's pasture a second time! This time, Luke is lucky enough to see it before Josh has a chance to lead it off to the pound. He dashes over into the field. Josh gets there at the same moment. "Hey, you, git out of my field!" he yells. "Don't *you* come a-trespassin' in here, as well as your horse!" But Luke is too hot to pay attention. He waves his arms, yells at the horse,

and finally chases him home, sweating. "You ain't quit of this yet!" yells Josh after him. "I'll hev the law on you!"

He does. He sues Luke for forty-nine shillings—forty shillings to be forfeited to the village poor fund and nine shillings for damages done to the pasture. The Big Case now comes before Colonel Quincy, justice of the peace; the Colonel's son, Sam, a boy of John Adams's age, also just beginning practice as a lawyer, represents Luke Lambert; and John Adams puts on his hat after dinner and hurries over to hear the argument. He finds a seat next his friend Sam Quincy, and, as soon as he hears the amount involved, he whispers to him:

"Take an exception on the warrant, to the jurisdiction of the justice; I don't believe a justice of the peace can settle cases involving a sum that large; the suit has to be brought in a court of record."

Young Sam clears his throat and makes the motion young John suggests. His father beams down on him. "Well, well, that's a point we shall have to look into! Court is adjourned till Monday morning."

Three weeks later the Colonel gets a letter from a jurist to whom he has written on the point, confirming Johnny's doubt that a justice of the peace may be properly called a court of record. "So you

see," the old gentleman says to John, beaming with parental pride, "Sammy was right, for he was all along of that opinion. I have forgot what *your* opinion was."

Johnny swallows, gulps, and says nothing.

So Josh Field's case against Luke Lambert is thrown out of Quincy's court and lost; but young Adams in the meantime has impressed Josh as being a smarter young lawyer than young Sam Quincy. Josh says to him, "Ain't there *no* way I can git my rights against this devil Lambert?" "Well," says John, "you might sue him on a writ charging that he committed trespass on your land to rescue his horse, just as you were about to turn the horse over to the poundmaster. You know the law says that any person who rescues his animal from the hands of a man who is about to drive it to the pound and thus hinder the man from collecting damages for what the animal has done to the field shall forfeit, &c." "Great!" says Josh. "Will you draw up that there writ for me?"

"My first determination," writes John, in his diary, "was right: I determined not to meddle. But, by the cruel reproaches of my mother, by the importunities of Jos. Field, and by the fear of having it thought I was *incapable* of drawing the writ, I was seduced from that determination . . . On November 18, I

this evening delivered to Mr. Field a declaration in trespass for a rescue. I was obliged to finish it without sufficient examination. It is quite undigested and unclerklike. I am ashamed of it, and concerned for it. If this, my first writ, should be rejected by the court, and thus a large bill of costs should be thrown upon my very first client, my character and business will suffer greatly; it will be said, I do not understand my business. No one will trust his interest in my hands. As a matter of fact, I never saw a writ based on that law of the Province. I was perplexed, and am very anxious about it."

In this state of anxiety, he can't resist a private dig, in his diary, at the man under whom he has been studying law, Colonel Putnam. "Now," he says, "I feel the disadvantages of Putnam's insociability and neglect of me." (This is the first hint that the Colonel was ever any but the kindest of friends and teachers.) "Had he given me, now and then, a few hints concerning *practice*, I should be able to judge better at this hour than I can now."

His resentment gives birth to a magnificent cry of courage: "I have reason to complain of him," he goes on, "*but it is my destiny to dig treasures with my own fingers; nobody will lend me or sell me a pick-axe.*"

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And, sure enough, in the next ten days, his forebodings are realized: his writ fails.

"November 29. . . . Lambert will laugh, no doubt, and will tell the story to every man he sees, and will squib me about it whenever he sees me. He is impudent and unfair enough to turn this, on every occasion, to my disadvantage. Impudence, drollery, villainy, in Lambert; indiscretion, inconsideration, and ill luck in me; and stinginess, as well as ill luck, on the side of Field—all unite in this case to injure me. Field's wrath waxed hot this morning, when he found himself defeated a second time. He wished the affair in hell, called Lambert a devil, and said, "that is always the way in this town; when any strange devil comes into town, he has all the privileges of the town."

The poor boy's mortification is acute.

The next case he notes in his diary comes up in March, 1759. Oddly enough, this also is a squabble over a horse—a poor, old, rackabones of a horse, valued at two dollars! If this was the amount at stake, imagine the size of the lawyers' fees. . . . Says John, "The agreement (between the owner of the horse, and my client, one Samuel Spear) was, that my client was to take the horse and keep him, and, if he *lived till April*, to pay two dollars for him; but, if he

died before, to pay nothing; now, he actually died in February, and, therefore, nothing, by contract, was to be paid. The keeping of so old a horse was more than the service he could do was worth; the hay he ate would have purchased more riding and drawing than the horse did through all that winter."

The young lawyer is disgusted with the whole thing. He sees no sense in the action, at all; but he goes to court nevertheless. "This," he says, "is undertaking the relief of distressed poverty; the defence of innocence and justice against oppression and injustice."

Bravo, John!

The court-room ante-chamber, he goes on, "was a scene of absolute confusion: Major Crosby persuading an agreement; the parties raging and scolding; Captain Hollis, Major Miller, and Captain Thayer, all three very active and busy, and interesting themselves in the suit, proposing each one *his* project; and all the spectators smiling, whispering, etc."

And thus begins the legal career of America's greatest defender of human rights. A horse that has done nine-pence worth of damage to a pasture; another horse that is such a bag of skin and bones that it can't live till April. . . .

Never mind!

But business, of a sort, picks up. He had presented himself to two of the leading attorneys in Boston, Jeremiah Gridley, Nestor of the Boston bar, and Benjamin Pratt, at the end of the first month after his return from Worcester; and on November 6, 1758, sponsored by Gridley, he is sworn in as a member of the Boston bar. "From 1758 to 1775, I practised at the bar and, suffering under ill health, I rode the circuits of the Province more than any other lawyer, and this more for exercise and the recovery of my health than for any profit I made by these excursions; for I could have made more in my office at home. . . ." His visits to Boston are frequent; his cases in the village of Braintree more and more fill him with disgust at their pettinesses.

"I have been longer in the argument of this cause," he bursts out over one of these village cases, when he is twenty-four, "not for the importance of the cause itself, for in itself it is infinitely little and contemptible, but for the importance of its consequences. . . . These dirty and ridiculous litigations have been multiplied in this town till the very earth groans and the stones cry out. The town is become infamous for them throughout the country. I have absolutely heard it used as a proverb in several parts of the Province: 'As litigious as Braintree.' "

More and more he becomes hotly engrossed in the broader issues that are beginning to fill the minds of thinking men who resent England's attitude toward her colonies. He is more deeply interested in laws that affect the rights of all the world than in the little petty squabbles of his native village. And this is why he so violently flares up, as he records in his diary entry of March 8, 1761. "Last Monday had a passionate wrangle with Eben Thayer. He called me *a petty lawyer*. . . ."

Never mind, Johnny—you are about to walk out upon the biggest stage in the world.

Two

FOOD " RIGHTS

CAIN WAS HUNGRY

"The present question before the human race, that great democratical tribunal, is whether the 'divine right' (the *highest* power), is in men or in magistrates; in human nature or in instituted offices; in human understanding or in holy oil; in good sense and sound morality, or in crowns, sceptres, crosses, and Episcopal and Presbyterian ordination. When and where shall we date the *commencement* of these struggles? I fear it must be from the death of Abel. The question is *still* before the democratical tribunal of the human race."

John Adams, in a letter to Thomas McKean

A flash of heat lightning suddenly flickers over the whole earth. Two young men are instantaneously illumined in it.

One is named John Adams. He is twenty-five years old. He is an obscure, penniless, "petty" lawyer, in a little New England village, just beginning his practice of the law.

The other is an amiable, wealthy, polished, somewhat pompous youth in his twenty-third year. His name is known over all the civilized world. It is George Welf. George Welf is "tall and strongly made, decidedly personable, and many ladies consider him

extremely handsome." He is indeed a splendid figure in his silk and satin robes and his jewels. He is known also as George the Third.

In this month, on November 18, 1760, the young George Welf, coming to the throne of England, makes his opening Address to Parliament. Over across the water, three thousand miles away, when the news reaches him in February, the unknown young lawyer, Adams, writes in his diary:

"He promises to patronize religion, virtue, the British name and constitution, in church and state; the subjects' rights, liberty, commerce, military merit. These are sentiments worthy of a king—a *patriot* king." A few days before, January 27, he has written in the same diary: "Last Friday I borrowed of Mr. Gridley a book on the Canon Law; it is one that will explain many things in ecclesiastical history and open up that system of fraud, bigotry, nonsense, impudence and superstition on which the papal usurpations are founded, besides increasing my acquaintance with civil law; for in many respects, the canon is grafted on the civil. . . ."

Young George opens a Parliament; young John opens a book.

You will see later what comes out of that book . . .

Also, in this same month of February, 1761, a Boston lawyer, James Otis, jr., was preparing to argue before the Superior Court in that city the justice of using what were called "writs of assistance" by customs officers, to enforce the British Acts of Trade.

And in the February term of this court, young John Adams heard Otis make his speech.

"When and where shall we date the commencement of these struggles for American independence? I fear it must be from the death of Abel"—but if one cannot go back that far, the month of February, 1761, will do as well as any other.

But for John Adams's part in it, we must go back a little further than that. We shall have to start with the year 1745, his tenth year.

It is unnecessary, in recounting Adams's part, to detract from the parts played by James Otis and other pioneers. Adams himself unhesitatingly gives them full admiration and credit for what they did. Yet his own work begins so early, is so closely knit with the work of these men; it goes on so much more broadly, after they, for one reason and another, have dropped out of the race, that it is impossible to be blind to the fact that he towers head and shoulders over them all.

With noble dignity, and with mournful pride, he

once said, "I always consider the whole nation as my children; but they have almost always been undutiful to me."

And at another time he writes, playfully, but in earnest, too:

"It is become fashionable to call me 'The Venerable.' . . . Pray change the title, and say, 'the venerable Washington,' 'the venerable Jefferson,' 'the venerable Madison': I have worn it too long. It is become threadbare on me. Do not, however, I pray you, call me 'the Godlike Adams,' 'the sainted Adams,' 'our Saviour Adams,' 'Our Redeemer Adams,' 'our Saviour on Earth and our Advocate in Heaven,' 'The Father of His Country,' 'The Founder of the American Republic,' 'the Founder of the American Empire,' etc., etc., etc. These ascriptions belong to no man; no! nor to any twenty men; nor to any hundred men, nor to any thousand men."

As usual, he is exactly right: the breaking away of the American people from English rule, and the formation of the government under which the American nation is conducted, cannot be ascribed to one man alone, nor to less than twenty leaders; and these twenty in turn could not have proceeded without the assistance of hundreds more; but in spite of this truth, in spite of Adams's own disclaimer, one

man inevitably looms larger than another, in all human affairs; and in these two supreme achievements John Adams certainly bulks larger than any other. If anyone is to be called "The Father of His Country," and "The Founder of the Republic" it is he.

1745

It is thirty years before the first gun of the Revolution is fired. Little Johnny Adams is ten years old. And he is a little pitcher with very big ears. He listens. His father talks, and his father's friends talk. "My father, who had a public soul, had drawn my attention to public affairs. *From my earliest infancy* I had listened with eagerness to his conversations with his friends during the whole expedition to Cape Breton, in 1745, and I had received very grievous impressions of the injustice and ingratitude of Great Britain towards New England in that whole transaction.

" 'The day on which I became a politician!' I have endeavored to recollect that day. It is a remote one. A mighty impression was made upon my little head at the time of the expedition against Cape Breton under General Pepperell in 1745, and on the approach of the Duke d'Enville's armament against Boston. . . . "

THIS MAN ADAMS

Must we go back a little, to sketch this background to the "mighty impression" upon the little head? In 1740, England had declared war upon Spain, "not for European conquests," says Bancroft, "or the balance of power, or religion, but *for the opportunities of commerce* with the colonies of Spain. . . . In endeavoring to open the ports of Spanish America to the mercantile enterprise of her own people, England was also, though unconsciously, making war on monopoly and advancing the cause of commercial freedom. . . . She began a career which *could not* end till American colonies of her own, as well as of Spain, should obtain independence."

At the same moment, France, under Louis XV, declared war upon Austria, again for motives of greed. England, true to its policy of forming alliances against its most powerful rival, sided with Austria; and in 1744 France therefore declares war upon England. In a flash, all Europe is once more ablaze. The flame leaps across the Atlantic: a body of French from Cape Breton attack the little English garrison at Canso, Nova Scotia, capture it, destroy the place, and retreat in victory.

The people of Massachusetts, loyal British colonists, perceive that there is danger that all Nova Scotia will fall into the hands of the French if immediate

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action is not taken. They resolve to capture Louisburg, the chief French stronghold of Cape Breton. Three thousand Massachusetts men, three hundred from New Hampshire and five hundred from Connecticut form the expedition, under the command of William Pepperell, a merchant, of Maine. Reaching Louisburg on May 1, they capture it on June 17. Little Johnny Adams witnesses the general transports of joy at the news. In 1746, a large fleet under the Duke d'Enville sails from France to attack New England and recover Louisburg; but, crippled by storms and disease, it is defeated by the English fleet.

And this, by his own story, is what the boy hears in his tenth year and is the date at which the small boy first becomes interested in the subject which is to interest him throughout life—politics. Why?

Because the loyal colonists, rejoicing in their suddenly discovered prowess as soldiers, now propose to go on and conquer all of Canada, for England; they vote to raise an army three times as large as that which had taken Louisburg; but no fleet comes from England to help them, and, by 1747, England directs that the colonial army be disbanded. The colonists are amazed, indignant. They discuss all this, bitterly; no doubt, this is the sort of talk that little John listened to daily. They conclude that England has her

own selfish reasons for thus "letting them down." A traveller in America in 1748, Peter Kalm, sets down for us their opinions:

"There is reason enough for doubting whether the king of England, even if he had the power, would wish to drive the French from their possessions in Canada. The English colonies in this part of the world have increased so much in wealth and population that they will vie with European England. But to maintain the commerce and the power of the mother land, they are forbid to establish new manufactures, which might compete with the English; they may dig for gold and silver only on condition of shipping them immediately to England; they have, with the exception of a few fixed places, no liberty to trade to any parts not belonging to the English dominions; and foreigners are not allowed the least commerce with these American colonies. And there are many similar restrictions.

"These oppressions have made the inhabitants of the English colonies less tender toward their mother land. . . . I have been told, not only by native Americans, but by English emigrants, publicly, that within thirty or fifty years the English colonies in North America may constitute a separate State, entirely independent of England. . . .

“But as this whole country is, towards the sea, unguarded, and on the frontier is kept uneasy by the French, these dangerous neighbors are the reason why the love of the colonies (for England) does not utterly decline. The English government has therefore reason to regard the French in North America as the chief power that urges their colonies to submission.”

If such expressions, that the colonists would soon set up an independent government, were uttered as early as 1748, the ear of Peter Kalm must have been a keener one than that of John Adams at that time. Mr. Adams, in a letter to George Alexander Otis, asserts flatly:

“Anterior to the Revolution, there never existed a desire of independence of the British crown. . . . It is true, there might be times and circumstances in which an individual, or a few individuals, might entertain and express a wish that America was independent in all respects, but these were ‘lonely swimmers in a vast sea.’ . . . That there existed a *general* desire of independence of the crown, in any part of America before the Revolution, is as far from the truth as the zenith is from the nadir. . . .”

He himself was one of these few who did wish it.

He gave utterance to his belief in 1755—twenty years before the Revolution.



1755

On October 12, 1755, young John Adams—at that date only nineteen years old—wrote a long letter to another youngster, his close friend. In it he wrote this amazing paragraph:

“Soon after the Reformation, a few people came over into this new world for conscience sake. Perhaps this apparently trivial incident may transfer the great seat of empire into America. It looks likely to me: for, if we can remove the turbulent Gallicks, (the French in Canada and along the Mississippi) our people, according to the exactest computations, will in another century become more numerous than England itself. *Should this be the case, since we have, I may say, all the naval stores of the nation in our hands, it will be easy to obtain the mastery of the seas; and then the united force of all Europe will not be able to subdue us.* The only way to keep us from setting up for ourselves is to disunite us. *Divide et impera.* Keep us in distinct colonies, and then, some great men in each colony desiring the monarchy of the whole, they will destroy each other’s influence and keep the country *in equilibrio.*”

When this letter was brought to his recollection,

years afterward, he well knew how significant it is. He observed, humorously but stubbornly:

"Thomas Jefferson has acquired such glory by 'his' Declaration of Independence in 1776, that I think I may boast of *my* declaration of independence in 1755, twenty-one years older than his. . . . To Samuel Adams, also, has been ascribed the honor of the first idea and project of independence. In 1755, when my letter was written, I had never seen the face of Samuel Adams. . . . There can be no doubt but this letter will make a distinguished figure in the memoirs of my life. . . . Now, Sir, to be serious—"

What had brought out this extraordinary letter from the boy of nineteen?

The excitements of 1745 were ten years in the distance behind him. But again the colonists found themselves at war with the French, and again they were irritated by England's method of conducting the war. Young Adams was merely getting a renewal of his education in public affairs. In 1755, he is in Worcester, Massachusetts, where, in addition to teaching school, he is studying law "in the office of Colonel James Putnam, a counsellor-at-law in very large practice and of very respectable talents and information.

"Here, as I boarded in his family, I had opportunities of conversing with all the judges, lawyers, and many others of the principal characters of the Province, and heard their speculations upon public affairs. This was highly delightful to me, because [as has already been noted] my father, who had a public soul, had drawn my attention to public affairs . . .

"I very distinctly remember that in the war of 1755, a union of the colonies, to defend themselves against the encroachments of the French, was the general wish of the gentlemen with whom I conversed; and it was the opinion of some that we could defend ourselves, and even conquer Canada, better without England than with her, if she would but allow us to unite and exert our strength, courage, and skill . . . It was the fear of this union of the colonies, which was indeed commenced in a congress at Albany [the provincial congress, held under Crown authority, in June, 1754, at which Benjamin Franklin presented his draft for a plan of union of the colonies, under the Crown] which induced the English to take the war into their own hands.

"We [the British colonists, in 1745, 1755-1759] conquered Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, dispossessed the French, both hostile and neutral, and did more, in proportion, towards the conquest of Can-

ada, than any other portion of the British empire; and would and could and should have done the whole, at an easier expense to ourselves, both of men and money, if the British government would have permitted that union of colonies which we projected, planned, earnestly desired, and humbly petitioned.

"In 1756, 1757, 1758, the conduct of the British generals Shirley, Braddock, Loudon, Webb and Abercrombie was so absurd, disastrous, and destructive that a very general opinion prevailed that the war was conducted by a mixture of ignorance, treachery, and cowardice; and some persons wished we had nothing to do with Great Britain forever. Of this number I distinctly remember I was myself one, fully believing that we were able to defend ourselves against the French and Indians without any assistance or embarrassment from Great Britain. . . .

"The war was so ill conducted by all the British commanders, until Wolfe and Amherst came forward, that the utmost anxiety prevailed, and a thousand panics were spread lest the French should overrun us all. All this time I was not alone in wishing that we were unshackled by Britain and left to defend ourselves.

"The conduct of Generals Shirley, Braddock, Abercrombie, Webb, and above all Lord Loudon, which

were daily discussed in Mr. Putnam's family, gave me such an opinion and such a disgust of the British government that I heartily wished the two countries were separated for ever. I was convinced we could defend ourselves against the French and manage our affairs better without, than with, the English . . . The treatment of the provincial officers and soldiers by the British officers during that war made the blood boil in my veins . . .

"Notwithstanding all this, I had no desire for independence as long as Britain would do us justice. I knew it must be an obstinate struggle, and saw no advantage in it as long as Britain should leave our liberties inviolate . . . In 1758 and 1759, Mr. Pitt, coming into power, sent Wolfe, and Amherst, whom I saw with his army, as they passed through Worcester, and these conquered Cape Breton and Quebec. I then rejoiced that I was an Englishman, and gloried in the name of Briton. But, alas! how short was my triumph in British wisdom and justice! In February, 1761, I heard the argument in the council chamber in Boston upon the 'writs of assistance' and there saw that Britain was determined to let nothing divert me from my fidelity to my country . . ."

The unconscious egoism of the concluding sentence is delicious and inevitable testimony to the young-

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ster's soul. "*Britain* was determined to let nothing divert *me!*" The great men shaping the policy of a great empire had never so much as heard the boy's name; they did not know that such a nobody existed, three thousand miles away in the American wilderness; but he solemnly conceives of them as proceeding in their dark plan, simply and solely to harass *him*. . . . It is absurd, but it is sublime.

There speaks the true Me-person.

But to return to 1755, and young Adams's letter, with its dream of an American empire. He writes, fifty-two years after its composition:

"A certain couplet has been repeated with rapture, as long as I can remember. It is this:

The eastern nations sink, their glory ends,
And empire rises where the sun descends.

"The tradition is that these lines were inscribed, or rather drilled, into a rock on the shore of Monument Bay, in our old colony of Plymouth, and were supposed to have been written and engraved there by some of the first emigrants from Leyden (the Puritans), who landed at Plymouth. I have heard these verses for more than sixty years . . . many years before my letter of 1755. . . .

"The claim of the 1776 men to the honor of first

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conceiving the idea of American independence, or of first revealing the project of it, is . . . ridiculous. I hereby disclaim all pretensions to it, because it was so much more ancient than my nativity.”

And yet—

VI

“TO MAKE BREAD, FIRST TAKE YEAST”

“Is there any precedent for that?’ someone asked me. ‘If there is not,’ I replied, ‘it is high time that a precedent should be set!’”

John Adams, in a letter to William Tudor

“As to the history of the American Revolution, my ideas may be peculiar, perhaps singular. What do we mean by the revolution? The war? *That was no part of the revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it.* The revolution was *in the minds of the people*; and this was effected from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was shed . . .”

John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson

THE most important article of human food is bread. The study of bread-making is of no slight importance, and deserves more attention than it receives.

Bread is made from flour of wheat, or other cereals, by addition of water, salt, *and a ferment*. The ferment used in bread-making is called yeast. Yeast is a microscopic plant of fungous growth, and is the lowest form of vegetable life . . . It consists of spores, or germs, found floating in air . . . Where

bread dough is allowed to ferment by addition of yeast, the fermentation is *alcoholic* . . . The ferment attacks some of the starch in the flour, and changes it to sugar, and sugar in turn to alcohol and carbon dioxide, thus lightening the whole mass. . . .

This description of bread-making, by Fannie Merritt Farmer, is a description of all political revolutions.

We constantly forget that the American Revolution was (and, in one sense, still *is*) *illegal*. It attacked the laws promulgated by the one truly legal authority then existing in America, and overthrew them. It *defied* this authority. It broke the laws, by wholesale . . .

John Adams, and his associates, sought to give, and succeeded in giving, to their illegal actions the *dress* of legality.

They did this by contending that the "rights" born with man when man was born on earth preceded and transcended the laws of England. This is what rebels must always do. In any rebellion, "the rights of man" must be evoked over the man-made laws of the moment. And if these rebels do not have great persuasive champions, like John Adams, to present this argument for them so convincingly that the majority is brought over to their side, they are "out of luck."

James Otis, the younger, of Boston, was the low-

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est form of vegetable life. He was yeast. . . . John Adams admired him tremendously.

Yeast is germs, floating in the air. . . .

For the gigantic baking of what is called the American nation, all the four necessary ingredients were present. The flour consisted of three million people. The water was three thousand miles of water, dividing England from America. This water had in it the proper amount of salt. The yeast floated in the air. The oven stretched from Maine to Georgia. Heat.

John Adams mixed the dough.

But James Otis was the yeast cake that attracted to itself the other particles of yeast that floated in the air, and started the ferment.

And a curious little figure, a man named Cockle, who is no longer anything but a name, the man himself being entirely forgotten, is the match that lit the oven of the American Revolution.

Knowing nothing of Cockle himself, we can the better imagine him. The word “cockle” means, variously, a small sea-shell; a weed that grows among wheat; a little, uneven, puckered-up lump of something or other. This particular cockle in the wheat of New England was, one must believe, an honest little fellow. He made his living, such as it was, by serving as a deputy revenue officer. It was his job to tramp

around the wharves of Salem, the next seaport to the north of Boston, and check over the merchandise coming in and out.

Honest officer Cockle had three laws to keep in mind, as he plodded on his rounds. One was that no goods were to be landed or shipped except in vessels built, captained, and mainly manned, by Englishmen. The second was that no goods should come off the ships and be landed in Salem except goods of British manufacture, and shipped there direct from England. The third was that any goods put on shore contrary to these two laws, or on which no duties had been paid, could be seized by the customs officers. And if he found any such foreign ships, foreign goods, or even smuggled British goods, he would be entitled to a prize of one-third their value, for turning in the information.

Mr. John Cockle, sitting down in a dockside Salem tavern to rest his weary feet, mop his forehead, and cool his dusty throat, had a right to grumble.

"Gor blime me, I wisht them Lords of the Committee on Trade and Plantations 'ad this job o' mine! Customs duties, indeed! Try an' colleck them! These 'ere Massachusetts English is cleverer than anybody at 'ome! Smuggle an' evade, evade *an'* smuggle, all dye

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an' all night! An' just you try to break into any warehouse, as the law says you can, an' seize these 'ere smuggled goods! A fat chawnse!”

He spits on the sawdust floor in disgust. It is impossible not to pity poor Mr. Cockle. He is honest, poor, tired, and baffled.

But in this black moment he has a sudden ray of hope, lighting up the dingy tavern with sudden glory. *Writs of assistance!* If he can't hunt out and seize these goods, on which no tax has been paid, by his own strength, he may certainly invoke some law that will give him full powers in such cases as these. *Writs of assistance!* They have these writs, back home in England, and have had them there for exactly one hundred years, for just such attempts at tax-dodging. Armed with one of *them*, a customs collector can call in a constable, a dozen of 'em if necessary, and “in the daytime enter and go into any house, shop, cellar, warehouse or room, or other place; and in case of resistance, to break open doors, chests, trunks, and other packages, there to seize, and from thence to bring any kinds of goods or merchandise whatsoever”—

Great! In the November term of the Supreme or Superior Court of the Province of Massachusetts,

poor Mr. Cockle solicited the Court to arm him with writs of assistance, so that he could do his job properly in Salem.

The match was struck.

The application for the writ was turned over to be heard when the Superior Court should next convene in Boston; and, says Mr. Adams, "in the month of February, 1761, James Otis electrified the town of Boston, the province of Massachusetts, and the whole continent, more than Patrick Henry ever did in the whole course of his life. . . . I shall only say, and I do say in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Otis's oration against *writs of assistance* breathed into this nation the breath of life. . . . I sincerely believe Mr. Otis to have been the earliest and the principal founder of one of the greatest political revolutions that ever occurred among men."

This great scene, the oration against the writs, took place in the Council Chamber in the old Town House in Boston. It was, for the times, a large and dignified hall. On two sides, the two most conspicuous sides, hung portraits, more than full length, of King Charles the Second and King James the Second, in splendid golden frames. They had been painted by some distinguished artist in England; the colors of the two monarchs' royal ermine and long flowing robes were

rich and glowing; their figures noble. At one end of the chamber, seated around a roaring fire of logs, were five men, five judges of the Superior Court, with Chief Justice Hutchinson first among them—all five arrayed in their new, fresh, rich robes of scarlet broadcloth (made in England) and all wearing enormous tie-wigs, immense and snowy fleeces, that shadowed their ruddy faces. At a long table were seated all the barristers of Boston and the neighboring county, in sable gowns and wigs of snow. A great company of the people, mainly the merchants of Boston and of Salem, filled the remainder of the chamber to the doors.

And one of the lawyers seated at that table was young John Adams, probably the youngest lawyer there, not admitted to practice before the Superior Court until the following November. “In that picture,” he begs, “paint me as looking like a short thick archbishop of Canterbury, seated at the table with a pen in my hand, lost in admiration at the eloquence of Otis, but now and then managing to scribble down some notes upon his argument.”

Otis spoke for five hours, a flame of fire. The torrent of his eloquence and the relentless logic of his reasoning was such, says young Adams, that at the close of the impassioned speech, every man in that

crowded audience "appeared to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against the writs." And Adams adds: "Then and there the child Independence was born!"

It was fortunate that the young Adams was there present. He himself insists that the notes he took of Otis's speech are like "the gleam of a glow-worm compared to the meridian blaze of the sun." But they are not only the fullest record of that memorable plea, as Adams later expanded them, but, in Adams's hands, their influence passed through the length and breadth of the colonies.

And what, as Adams records them, are their chief foundations?

First, Otis maintained that no man had a right to take another man's property from him, on any pretext whatsoever.

Second, he maintained that no combination of men, as a government, had a right to take property from an individual. The only reason for government, he insisted, is to insure the rights of the individual.

Third, he maintained that no citizen, unless he had instructed his direct representative in the government to relinquish those rights, could have them taken from him in any other manner. As the colonists had no direct representative in the government

that proposed to tax them—and taxation is a form of property confiscation—their natural rights to their property could not be attacked in the manner proposed.

Fourth, he maintained that while a government may regulate the commerce of its citizens its trade regulations must not contain provisions which affect adversely the pocket-books of its citizens. If such clauses are to be made law, they must be contained in laws openly designed to produce revenue.

Upon these four massive pillars of *property rights*, it will be seen, the independence and the government of America is to be built.

Notice their character. They are all, as a musician says, “variations on a theme.” That theme is Property.

As such, their appeal was irresistible. They found instant response in the mind of every *Me*-person, every *Mine*-person.

Like the microscopic germs of yeast, these thoughts were “floating in the air” everywhere. In a flash, James Otis solidified them, made them the ferment in the bread.

There is nothing mystic about the origin of the American revolution. Laws, as Beard reminds us, are not born miraculously out of thin air: they are *made*,

as the great seventeenth-century philosopher on government, James Harrington, in whom John Adams steeped himself from youth, discovered—made by the tug and pull of well defined property interests. Harrington it was who discovered that governmental power is based on “the balance of property, whether lodged in one, a few, or many hands.” And Adams applauds, saying: “A *noble* discovery, of which the honor solely belongs to Harrington, as much as the circulation of the blood to Harvey. . . .”

Harrington it was who wrote—and whom Adams quoted—this extraordinarily frank, relentlessly scientific, observation:

“Domestic government is founded on dominion, and dominion is property, real or personal; that is to say, in lands, or in money and goods . . . *If* the whole people be landlords, or hold the lands so divided among them, that no one man, or number of men, within the compass of the few, or aristocracy, over-balance them, (then) the nation is a common-wealth. . . .”

And not otherwise, added this man Adams . . .

Who are the men responsible for most of the troubles of poor Mr. Cockle, the deputy collector of revenue who trotted about so patiently and so futilely in his efforts to apprehend the merchant-



smugglers and their goods? The ones who troubled him most were *not* the farmers who at last were goaded into firing at the redcoats from behind the stone walls at Lexington, nor the Boston tradespeople whose blood dripped on the green slopes of Bunker Hill; they were mostly the well-to-do *Tory* merchants of Boston and New York. They were the men of property, who thought the Old would guard that property better than the New. When the war came, they did *not* side with the men who fought to keep them out of Mr. Cockle's clutches. They sided with that presumably loyal Briton! There is a flavor of irony in it, somewhere, if one could only lay one's finger on it . . . We have this on the say-so of Mr. Adams himself; but it would be interesting to check it by ascertaining the subsequent war-time affiliations of those who did most of the smuggling.

The *immediate* point in Otis's speech was that the *only* statute cited in support of the employment of writs of assistance was one which expressly stipulated that such writs could be issued only under the seal of the British Court of Exchequer.

Could it possibly be pretended, sarcastically demanded Otis, that the Superior Court of the province of Massachusetts was one and the same as His Majesty's Court of Exchequer in England? Whatever

power of this nature was possessed by the Massachusetts court, he reminded them, was derived from the provincial legislature. Did it, he demanded, have the power to issue such warrants, for such searches? He had driven the five judges in their scarlet robes into a corner from which they could not escape. They sat there, glumly silent. The crowded council chamber rang with Otis's ironic demands that they produce this authority from the Court of Exchequer. "They had none, and they could have none from England, and they dared not say that *their* provincial court was 'His Majesty's Court of Exchequer.' Their Chief Justice, Hutchinson himself, dared not say it. *The principle would have been fatal to parliamentary pretensions.*"

The court's quandary was complete. To have assumed that they could issue a revenue-collecting law—for such the writ of assistance was, in fact—would be to assume that it had the power of the British Parliament; and this, the five scarlet-robed judges well knew, a provincial law-court dared not assume.

They retired to deliberate. The crowd swept out-of-doors, trembling with excitement. Days later, the Chief Justice hemmed and hawed and said that the question must be postponed till next term of court; and in the meantime they would write to England and

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see what was to be done about it. No authority for the writs was *ever* shown to the people of Massachusetts; but, some six or nine months later, the business of breaking into warehouses and seizing goods began again.

For the next four years the yeast fermented.

And in 1764 George Grenville, new Prime Minister of England, moved and carried in the House of Commons a set of bills making it lawful for England to lay taxes, particularly stamp duties, upon the colonies.

“Nothing,” declared John Adams, “ever touched to the quick the people of all classes, in any country, like taxation.”

To the quick! Yea, to the veriest raw, the tenderest, most vital spot of all, the instinct of *property* preservation! Here, as he is continually doing, this man Adams comes out and speaks the naked truth.

“Damn you,” says the Me-and-Mine person—and there were a million of them—in a cold, deadly fury, “do not lay a finger on *my* belongings—without my expressed permission!”

Do you not believe this was the truth? Do you cling to the belief that the resentment was due mainly to a real or anticipated interference with *religious* liberties? This man Adams will set us straight

on that, speedily. He has been at pains, just *before* blurting out this truth, to point out the great part that the attitude of the people on religious freedom had to do with the Revolution. It contributed, he asserts at first, "as much as any other cause" to the eventual arrival of the revolution. But then he goes on to show the steps in the chain of reasoning. The colonists loathed the idea of an episcopacy, which, by crossing to New England, they had escaped; only Parliament could create an episcopacy in America; *and*, if parliament could establish an episcopacy, it could also impose all other penalties at its whim, penalties extending "to liberty and property."

This dismal prospect, culminating in governmental attacks on *property*, and *not* the fear of interference with religious freedom, is, affirms Adams, the motivating cause of the revolution. And by Grenville's proposed taxations, in 1764, the New Englanders are touched "to the quick" and their resentment immediately bursts into spreading flame.

Adams is very explicit on this. He describes and analyzes this instant uproar of the people. "The cry was, if parliament can tax us, we are undone forever, in soul, body, and estate. They can give us what re-

ligion and government they please, and do what they will with our property, persons, and consciences. How often have I heard in conversation in private companies, and how often was it said in the streets, ‘I will never live to see such acts of parliament executed in this country,’ and how constantly it was echoed from man to man, ‘nor I,’ ‘nor I,’ ‘nor I,’ and no man thought it expedient to say, ‘I will.’ ”

“Nothing,” he says frankly, “*in religion or government* ever touched to the quick the people of all classes in any country, like taxation . . .”

To see the true power of the colonists’ collective fury it will be necessary to appraise, set down, and total up the value of the property and the property-making hopes of the five hundred thousand men in a new country whose natural resources were richer than any ever before dreamed: to list the farms, the cotton fields, the indigo-plantations, the rice-fields, the wheat fields, the lumber and turpentine forests, the fisheries, the shipping offices, the shipyards and the countless shops, the wealth that these were then producing and the wealth which their owners knew that they would produce in generations to come. The fury of *one* man who sees a hand clutching at his property is the fury of one man; the fury of ten thousand men

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who are thus simultaneously alarmed is far greater in its mass than ten thousand times one . . .

Hunger must have food. Bread cannot be snatched from the mouths of the hungry. To make bread, first take yeast . . .

JUSTICE IS A FOOD

"'The avenue to the public ear is shut' in Massachusetts . . . Have naked truth and honest candor a fair hearing or impartial reading in this or any other country? Have not narrow bigotry, the most envious malignity, the most base, vulgar, sordid, fishwoman scurrility, and the most palpable lies, a plenary indulgence, and an unbounded licentiousness?"

John Adams, in a letter to James Lloyd

ACCORDING to friends of the American Civil Liberties Union, an organization with offices at 80 Fifth Avenue, New York City, John Adams, a well-known American lawyer, came one day, recently, into Boston from his residence in Braintree, a suburb, and offered his services as a lawyer in the defence of two foreigners accused of murdering certain American citizens.

Was this in August, 1770, or August, 1927? Mr. Adams, who was born October 30, 1735, is, in 1927, almost one hundred and ninety-two years old. He crosses Boston Common with as jaunty a step, however, as that of a man of thirty. He is in his prime today.

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Mr. Adams's offer to appear as defense counsel is nevertheless brushed aside. It is doubtful if his voice is even heard. The uproar of popular indignation against the prisoners was so great; the people of Massachusetts, of all classes, so firmly determined that the men should die, that it is perhaps fortunate for Mr. Adams that he had no opportunity to appear in behalf of the accused. Had he done so, it is virtually certain that his own popularity would have vanished and he himself thereafter viewed with suspicion.

In various parts of the United States, the year previous, 1926, thirty-four men suspected of serious crime but not yet convicted on these charges, had been seized by mobs and lynched. Here again, this man Adams was fortunate. Had he visited the communities in which these men lived, before their execution at the hands of the mobs, and had attempted to procure a legal trial for them, his own fate would have been uncertain. A community in which public sentiment is universally against the accused is in no mood to brook interference.

Mr. Adams, however, has not the slightest regard for public opinion. He is not intimidated by it. He has walked, with firm step and head erect, through the streets of Boston, on his way to defend foreign-

ers accused of murdering citizens of Massachusetts, while those streets were lined with men who hated the alien prisoners and all that they stood for. The occasion was, according to his grandson, the first great crisis in the life of John Adams. And this is the manner in which it arose and the manner in which he met it:

The most unpopular characters in Boston from October, 1768, through 1769 to 1770, were some two thousand soldiers in scarlet coats. When they were landed there they were in a forlorn condition—there were no barracks for them, no shelter, it was difficult to find food for them, and, in the New England winters, they were both starving and freezing. The people of Boston refused to let them be quartered in their houses. They would have “as soon admitted panthers or rattlesnakes.” Their officers, sensing the dangerous hostility, dared not order them to break in and find lodgings for themselves. They appealed to the mercy of the citizens. “Will you let these men die in your streets, under your eyes? *They* have no malice against you—they are here only because they have to obey orders.” The people yielded to this plea. Quarters were found for the troops. But, from the end of 1768 to the beginning of 1770, a period of more than a year, the inhabitants of Boston continued to regard the redcoats with resentment, indignation and hatred;

and wrangles and quarrels were constantly breaking out between citizens and soldiers.

John Adams was then living in a white-painted house in Cole Lane, off Brattle Square, in which square one regiment of the redcoats was paraded daily. It was not until thirty years later that he lived in *the* White House.

As he daily, for more than a year, walked by these universally despised and hated fellows, on his way to his law offices, his face was grave. He was seriously worried. He himself loathed the power that had sent them there, but he equally hated mob violence—and he knew, every day, as he crossed the square, that it was almost inevitable that mob violence would break out. He knew this, not only by his deep reading of history, but by the scenes attending church trials which he himself had witnessed. In four separate religious controversies, he says, "I had learned enough to show me, in all their dismal colors, the total suppression of equity and humanity in the human breast, when thoroughly heated and hardened by party spirit."

He was urged, throughout these anxious months, to go to the town meetings and harangue there. He refused, steadily. He was too well aware that the mob



spirit lay loose, like gunpowder; and he refused to strike any matches.

In February, 1770, a mob of patriots pursued a Tory shopkeeper into his house and tried to force their way in. He fired upon them and killed one of the mob—a boy, eleven or twelve years old. He came within a hair of being dragged off and strung up to the nearest lamp-post. With difficulty, he was taken through the mob to jail. Adams attended the boy's funeral and noted the immense popular attendance; "My eyes never beheld such a funeral; the procession extended further than can be well imagined." He was thoroughly alive to the temper of the people. To oppose them would be rashness itself.

On the evening of the fifth of March, only a week after this funeral, Mr. Adams put on his hat and cloak and walked over to the home of Mr. Henderson Inches, several blocks to the south, to attend a meeting of a club with which he had been associated for several years. Snow lay on the ground in the moonlight and crunched under his feet as he walked along, thinking.

"About nine o'clock, we were alarmed with the ringing of bells, and, supposing it to be the signal of fire, we snatched our hats and cloaks, broke up the

club, and went out to assist in quenching the fire, or aiding our friends who might be in danger.

"In the street, we were informed that the British soldiers had fired on the inhabitants, killed some and wounded others, near the town-house.

"A crowd of people was flowing down the street to the scene of action. When we arrived, we saw nothing but some field-pieces placed before the south door of the town-house, and some engineers and grenadiers drawn up to protect them." The first excitement was over.

"Mrs. Adams, who was in circumstances to make me apprehensive of the effect of the surprise upon her (her second son, Charles, was born two months later), was alone, excepting her maids and a boy (John Quincy Adams, her first son, then aged less than three?) in the house. Having therefore surveyed around the town-house, and seeing all quiet, I walked down Boylston Alley into Brattle Square, where a company or two of regular soldiers were drawn up in front of Dr. Cooper's old church, with their muskets all shouldered and their bayonets all fixed. I had no other way to proceed but along the whole front of their line, in a very narrow space which they had left for foot passengers. Pursuing my way without taking the least notice of them, or

they of me, any more than if they had been marble statues, I went directly home to Cole Lane."

What had happened was this: A single redcoat sentry had been walking his beat in the trodden snow that night, in the moonlight, in front of the small custom-house on King Street. There had been an exchange of epithets between a crowd and the soldiers in Washington Street and at Murray's barracks, in what is now Brattle Street, but this was dying away harmlessly—when a barber's apprentice noticed the lone sentry in King Street and called the attention of the stragglers of the mob to him. They crowded around him and began to taunt him. Alarmed, he called to the corporal of the guard for help. An officer, Captain Preston, the corporal, and six soldiers turned out to help him. Forty or fifty townspeople speedily collected. Stones and sticks began to fly at the soldiers.

The soldiers fired a volley from their muskets.

Six of the townspeople fell wounded, five fell dead.

The town at once broke into tumult. The bells, which John Adams and his friends, at their peaceful club-meeting, had imagined were an alarm of fire, rang out. Drums were beaten. The snowy moonlit streets of the old town echoed to the cry, "Town-born, turn out, turn out!" They poured from every house. Captain Preston managed to get his squad over

to the town-house, and here the regiment was drawn up in three lines on the north side of the building. Adams, hurrying up, saw a few soldiers on the south front of the building. At the same time, Colonel Carr, commanding the regiment, was advised by the acting Governor, Hutchinson, to withdraw his men to their barracks. They retired, and the crowd, slowly and reluctantly, dispersed.

But Hutchinson remained at the Council Chamber in anxious consultation with Colonel Dalrymple, commander of both regiments, while a hastily summoned court took testimony and decided to issue a warrant for Captain Preston. At 3 in the morning, Preston surrendered himself and was committed safely to jail.

But the feelings of the people grew hotter throughout the morning. A turbulent town-meeting demanded the immediate removal of the troops, from the town to the "Castle," the barracks on an island in the harbor. A second mass-meeting, larger than the first, reiterated the demand. Hutchinson, thoroughly alarmed, yielded. The burial day of the victims of the soldiers' volley fanned the flames even higher. "The current thus setting toward the final condemnation of the prisoners was so strong as to bid fair to overawe



justice even in the highest tribunal of the state." The words are those of Mr. Adams's grandson.

John Adams went to his law office as usual, the morning after the shootings, and while the town was seething with this excitement. There he was visited by a friend of Captain Preston's, begging him to undertake the defence of Preston. The friend asserted that not a lawyer in all Boston would undertake the case. No argument could have been better chosen, to arouse a man of Adams's pugnacious disposition. He accepted instantly.

"I had *no hesitation* in answering that counsel ought to be the very last thing that an accused person should want in a free country; that the bar ought, in my opinion, to be independent and impartial, at all times, and in every circumstance. . . ."

And how overwhelmingly against the prisoners were those circumstances! The whole city, nay, the whole colony of Massachusetts, foaming with rage against these foreign disturbers of their rights—for foreigners they were certainly regarded; and is this man Adams, whom they are beginning to know as a defender of those rights, about to go over to the enemy? His law practice, thus far, has been growing more and more lucrative—but, if he persists in this

mad championship, will it not now dwindle away to nothing?

"I will take the case," he said to the prisoner's friend.

Then he put on his hat, went home, and told his wife, sick and nervous in her approaching motherhood.

The actual trial did not come on for more than seven months. It began on October 24 and continued till October 30. Captain Preston's lawyer had no difficulty in winning for him a verdict of "Not guilty"—for it was impossible to prove that he had given the orders to fire. The trial of the eight soldiers followed a month later.

In this, this man Adams argued upon the ground that the law considers killing in self defence not murder but homicide. He was careful to rest his appeal not upon his own eloquence, but upon established facts, as established in a hundred legal decisions. Then he analyzed the testimony of the witnesses called, in the same careful fashion; and from this testimony he showed the unmistakable fact that the soldiers had not been the first to resort to violence.

"Facts are stubborn things," he concluded, "and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the

dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence. . . .

"To your candor and justice I submit the prisoners and their cause. The law, in all the vicissitudes of government, fluctuations of the passions, or flights of enthusiasm, will preserve a steady undeviating course. It will not bend to the uncertain wishes, imaginations and wanton tempers of men. In the words of Sidney:

" 'The law no passion can disturb. 'T is void of desire and fear, lust and anger. . . . It does not enjoin that which pleases a weak, frail man, but, without any regard to persons, commends that which is good, and punishes evil in all, whether rich or poor, high or low. 'T is deaf, inexorable, inflexible. On the one hand, it is deaf to the cries and lamentations of the prisoner; on the other, it is deaf, deaf as an adder, to the clamors of the populace.' "

The jury was out about two hours and a half. It found none of the prisoners guilty of murder. Two were branded, as having certainly fired fatal shots; the others were discharged.

Mr. Adams once more quietly picked up his law books, that he had marshaled for the case, put on his hat and walked quietly home. He had fearlessly faced a Fear, and it had vanished into thin air. He had faced

the whole mob pack, in full blood cry, and refused to be swept along with it. And, strangely enough, his courage did not cost him the confidence of the people. Even before the case came to trial, he was elected, for the first time, to the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The test had come, and he had met it without surrender. Other men had not. Of them, he had written thoughtfully in his diary, at the very time of the trials, that tragic line from Shakespeare:

If I would but go to hell, for an eternal moment or so, I would be knighted. . . .

He never seems to get over this sort of attitude. An insurrection against the government of the United States took place in Pennsylvania, years later, led by one Fries; and the popular clamor was all for the execution of this enemy of the government. But this man Adams, then President, with the power of life and death in his hands, has his own ideas:

"I pardoned Fries," he writes. "What good, what example, would have been exhibited to the nation, by the execution of three or four miserable Germans, as ignorant of our language as they were of our laws, and the nature and definition of treason? . . . If I had entertained only a *doubt* of their guilt, *notwithstanding verdicts and judgments*, it was my duty to pardon them. . . ."

JUSTICE IS A FOOD

Years after this trial, Adams asserted: "Not the battle of Lexington or of Bunker Hill, not the surrender of Burgoyne or Cornwallis, were more important events in American history than this battle of King Street, on the fifth of March, 1770." He then had in mind the circumstance that the encounter in the streets crystallized the resentment of the people against the imposition of British troops upon them, by the British Parliament: "Good God!" said the public, "is this our situation already? Is a military authority already erected over the civil authority? . . . If parliament was omnipotent, of what use could our houses of representatives be?" But it must be noted that he affirms that this event *was* important in American history; and that his decision to defend the prisoners against the overwhelming force of public opinion *is* the important event. The tense of that act can never change.

This man Adams is alive. . . .

It is his business to teach agitators for a new form of government—though he himself is such an agitator—that they *must not* take The Law into their own hands.

VIII

HIGH COST OF HUNGER

IN May, 1770, this man Adams had more business at the bar, according to his own statement, "than any other man in the Province." He had rich clients. Among them was John Hancock, the richest man in New England. Adams, in 1768, was retained by Hancock to represent him in the suit brought against Hancock by the government to recover duties on a cargo of wine from Madeira which Hancock had brought ashore from the sloop *Liberty* without paying customs duties. The value of the wine, with the penalties assessed, came to a half million dollars. Adams was employed on this case for seven years. His fees must have been considerable. And this was but one of his cases.

In May, 1770, he was chosen a member of the House of Representatives. He had not solicited the nomination. Hearing of his election, and accepting it, he went home and said to his wife, to whom a child was born that month:

"I have accepted a seat in the House of Represen-

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tatives, and thereby have consented to my own ruin, to your ruin, and the ruin of our children. I give you this warning, that you may prepare your mind for your fate."

Very naturally, the poor woman burst into tears. But through her tears she cried, "I am willing in this cause, to run all risks with you and be ruined with you, if you are ruined."

Those were times, said Adams afterwards, that tried women's souls as well as men's.

Otis, talking with some friends one evening in 1770, estimated that his opposition to the government measures in the ten years preceding had cost him not less than four thousand pounds; those present knew that it had cost him much more, in loss of clients and influential friends. But Otis, laughing, said to William Molineux, who had been bemoaning his own losses, of another sort:

"Now, Willy, my advice to you is, to say no more about your grievances; for you and I had better put up our accounts of profit and loss in our pockets, and say no more about them, lest the world should laugh at us."

But the world cannot laugh at a man like Otis; nor can it laugh at this man Adams, who stands ready to sacrifice "as bright prospects as any man ever had

before him" and exchange them for the prospect of "endless labor and anxiety, if not infamy and death. . . ."

This man Adams, in 1773, is riding on horseback on his way to some of the circuit courts of the province. He stops one night at a tavern in Shrewsbury, some forty miles from Boston. He is cold and wet. He sits down at a good fire in the bar-room, to dry his greatcoat and his saddle-bags, while waiting for a fire to be made in his own bedroom. Into the bar-room comes one after another of the farmers and villagers. One by one they gather around the fire-place, light their pipes, and are soon deep in a lively discussion of England's efforts to tax them. The little lawyer from Boston doesn't know any of them, and listens in silence, but with keen interest.

"The folks up to Boston are plumb distracted these days," says one. "Who wouldn't be?" retorts another. "Oppression will drive even wise men mad." "What would *you* say," asks another, "if a fellow should come to your house, and tell you he was come to take a list of your cattle, so that parliament might tax you for them at so much a head? and how should you feel if he was to go and break open your barn, to take down your oxen, cows, horses and sheep?" "What should I say?" exclaims the first, "I would knock him

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in the head!" "Well," says a fourth, "if parliament can take away Mr. Hancock's wharf and Mr. Rowe's wharf, they can take away your barn and my house."

The arguments go on around the log-fire for a long while. Finally one of the villagers, who had been sitting in silence, breaks out:

"Well, it is high time for us to rebel; we must rebel some time or other, and we had better rebel now than at any time to come. If we put it off for ten or twenty years, and let them go on as they have begun, they will get a strong party among us and plague us a great deal more than they can now. So far, they have only a few over here who approve of what they're trying to do to us."

The landlord comes to tell the quiet little lawyer that the fire in his room is ready; and he goes upstairs, pondering glumly over what he has just heard. "I was disgusted at the word *rebel*," he writes, "because *I* was determined never to rebel . . . though I was equally determined to resist rebellion (on the part of British generals and British governors of our colonies) against the fundamental privileges of the British Constitution. . . ."

Here, as on countless other occasions, he blithely contradicts what he has elsewhere affirmed, that he had nursed the idea of independence for the Ameri-

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can colonies for many years before this; but inconsistency has always been one of this man Adams's chief charms. He is delightfully like the rest of us Me-persons and says what he wants to say at the moment.

But the talk of the good citizens around that tavern fire-place is immensely significant. They are getting their dander up. And it is solely and simply on the question of property rights. It is no wonder that the little lawyer from Boston, a born politician, is impressed. He has laid his ear, to his surprise, right to the ground, and he will toss a long while on his tavern pillow tonight, as the inevitable pointing of this talk sinks into his mind. *No* government shall tamper with what a Me-man owns. We won't stand for it. Look out—hell's about to break loose!

If we can dimly see Mr. Adams, tossing there on his pillow in the dark, we can see a dreadful black Shape sitting there beside his bed. It is a Bogey—the Bogey That Makes Wars. It is a Fear. It is the Fear that some power is going to take away from you what you own. . . . When these honest citizens finish their last glass of rum at the tavern tonight and creep into bed, each of them is going to find that black Shape sitting alongside, as It has for many a night. . . .

Nobody in all the province of Massachusetts has a better opportunity to find out what Tom, Dick and

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Harry are thinking than has this man Adams. For ten years he has been riding to and fro in the province, on his way to sessions of the circuit court. Men gather at these sessions. They come in from miles around. Adams hears them arguing in the hall, at the taverns, on the streets. He puts up for the night at some roadside inn and listens to the troubled talk of the men in the little bar-room. He lodges, sometimes, at the house of some farmer who has built near the turn-pike, and spends the evening in sounding out the man's thoughts. He is a sponge, soaking in the opinions of the whole country-side. He circulates between men of all ranks, for he meets the wealthy merchant and the powerful judge as well as the poor man. If the year were 1930, instead of 1770, and he a reporter, assigned by a modern newspaper to ascertain the trend of public opinion by interviewing men of all sorts, throughout Massachusetts, he couldn't make a better job of it than he has done in his Diary.

Through it all, he himself is as much of a man of Possessions as any stout farmer of them all. A man's joy and pride in what he owns, his hot passionate glorying in what is *his*, rings out in some of these diary entries clear as a bugle note. He has one passage, written when he is only twenty-six, that is of exquisite beauty, simplicity, charm, and revealment:

"October 22, 1762. Sunday. Before sunrise. My thoughts have taken a sudden turn to husbandry. Have contracted with Jo. Field to clear my swamp, and to build me a long string of stone wall, and with Isaac to build me sixteen rods more, and with Jo. Field to build me six rods more. And my thoughts are running continually from the orchard to the pasture, and from thence to the swamp, and thence to the house and barn and land adjoining. Sometimes I am at the orchard ploughing up acre after acre, planting, pruning apple-trees, mending fences, carting dung; sometimes building wall to redeem posts and rails; and sometimes removing button-trees down to my house; sometimes I am at the old swamp, burning bushes, digging stumps and roots, cutting ditches across the meadows and against my uncle's boundaries; and am sometimes at the other end of the town buying posts and rails to fence against my uncle, and against the brook; and am sometimes ploughing the upland with six yoke of oxen, and planting corn, potatoes, &c., and digging up the meadows and sowing onions, planting cabbages, &c., &c. Sometimes I am at the homestead, running cross fences, and planting potatoes by the acre, and corn by the two acres, and running a ditch along the line between me and Field, and a fence along the brook against my brother,

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and another ditch in the middle from Field's line to the meadows. Sometimes am carting gravel from the neighboring hills, and sometimes dust from the streets upon the fresh meadows, and am sometimes ploughing, sometimes digging those meadows to introduce clover and other English grasses. . . ."

How fresh and sweet the air that blows across such a page, written in the clear light of the October morning! What was it that the French philosopher said— "The man who first fenced in a yard, and said, 'This is *mine*,' ought instantly to have been put to death"? Isn't his recommendation superfluous? Will not that man put himself to death, in defending his property? Has he not already said to his wife, "I have determined to defend my property rights, and have thereby consented to my own ruin, to your ruin, and the ruin of our children?"

The little lawyer jogs on, from town to town, seeing himself mirrored in a thousand men. On March 22, 1765, the Stamp Act, passed by the British Parliament in spite of warnings, formally became law. It provided that the cost of maintaining a garrison of ten thousand British troops, to be quartered in America, ostensibly for the protection of the colonies against attack from outside, should be met by the revenue from special taxes to be laid, two-thirds upon

England and one-third upon America; revenue stamps to be issued to show payment of such taxes. The news reaches America in May. Resentment spreads and grows hotter during the summer. In October, just before this man Adams's thirtieth birthday, the people of his town of Braintree request him to draw up a paper instructing their representative in the provincial Assembly to resist the provisions of the Stamp Act. He does so, his draught is unanimously adopted, and besides being sent to the town's representative is printed in the Boston newspaper. "They rang through the State and were adopted, word for word, by forty other townships, as instructions to *their* representatives." Some of its paragraphs are incorporated by Samuel Adams in the instructions drafted by him for the representatives of the town of Boston, a paper characterized as being "the voice, not merely of his town, not merely of his Province, but of the colonial continent."

This paper of John Adams's, adopted on September 24, 1765, and published October 14, ringingly enunciates the principle that "no freeman should be subject to any tax to which he has not given his own consent, in person or by proxy," basing this on the fundamental maxim that "no freeman can be separated from his property but by his own act or fault."

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Upon this simple statement, wholly Selfish, wholly Unselfish, by this man Adams, the whole fabric of America rests . . .

"It is," he declared, unshakably, "inconsistent with the spirit of the common law, and of the essential fundamental principles of the British constitution, that we should be subject to any tax imposed by the British Parliament; because we are not represented in that assembly in any sense, unless it be by a fiction of law, as insensible in theory as it would be injurious in practice, if such a taxation should be grounded upon it."

The chubby young man goes on from town to town for ten years, listening, observing, noting down everything. A fierce wind, a soaking rain, miry roads and banks of snow do not deter him from attendance on town meetings. Sometimes he takes his young wife with him, on a trip to Salem, where his dear friend Cranch lives. There they drink tea, "and are all very happy. Sat and heard the ladies talk about ribbon, catgut, and Paris net, riding-hoods, cloth, silk, and lace. Brother Cranch came home, and a very happy evening we had." But a few days later they see with disgust, "five boxes of dollars, containing, as we were told, about eighteen thousand of them, going in a horse-cart from Salem custom-house to Boston, in order to be shipped to England. A guard of armed men,

with swords, hangers, pistols, and muskets, attended it." And at the same moment the Stamp Act is repealed. A momentary calm succeeds to the angry resentments, and he begins to think of gathering property in his private business. "Now that I am on the stage, and the scene is soon to open, what part shall I act? . . . Am I grasping at money, or scheming for power? Am I planning the benefit of my family, or the welfare of my country? I am mostly intent, at present, upon collecting a library. But when I shall have completed my library, my end will not be answered. Fame, fortune, power, say some, are the ends intended by a library. The service of God, country, clients, fellow men, say others. Which of these lie nearest my heart? I am certain, however, that the course I pursue will neither lead me to fame, fortune, power, nor to the service of my friends, clients, or country. What plan of reading, or reflection, or business, can be pursued by a man who is now at Pownalborough, then at Martha's Vineyard, next at Boston, then at Taunton, presently at Barnstable, then at Concord, now at Salem, then at Cambridge, and afterwards at Worcester? Now at Sessions, then at Pleas, now in Admiralty, now at Superior Court, then in the gallery of the House? Here, there, and everywhere—a rambling, roving, vagrant, vagabond life!"



He grumbles thus, but, though he may not be aware of it, it is the perfect preparation for what he has yet to do. He mistakes the stage that he has walked out upon, and "the scene that is soon to open." For mutterings of discontent, momentarily quieted by the repeal of the Stamp Act, are again arising. He is elected to a seat in the Massachusetts General Assembly, and, with the other three representatives of the town, immediately starts a controversy by emphasizing the principle that authority in the Province is derived from this assemblage of the people's representatives, not from the Governor appointed by the King. The old former Governor, Shirley, upon whom young George Washington, of Virginia had called reverently, fifteen years before this, hears of the controversy to revive the phrase "and by the authority of the General Assembly," and growls in his retirement.

"Who has revived those old words?" he demands. "They were expunged during my administration." "The Boston representatives." "And who are they?" "Mr. Cushing, Mr. Hancock, Mr. Samuel Adams, and Mr. John Adams." "Mr. Cushing I knew, and Mr. Hancock I knew," growls the old Governor, "but where the devil this brace of Adamses come from, I know not."

Between sessions of the Assembly, the younger of this devil's brace goes back to his travels on his law cases. Journeying to Plymouth, at a tavern, he finds a man who, hearing that this is Mr. Adams, goes out as Adams is about to leave, saddles his horse for him, bridles it, and holds the stirrup while John Adams mounts. "Mr. Adams," says he, "as a man of liberty, I respect you. God bless you! I'll stand by you while I live; and from here to Cape Cod you won't find ten men who think otherwise!"

On his way one day to Falmouth, in Casco Bay, he stops overnight at a tavern upon whose signboard the landlord has painted, "Entertainment for the Sons of Liberty." This man Adams notes, "Thus the spirit of liberty circulates through every minute artery of the Province." And after his day's business he comes back to the inn and takes a pipe after supper with the landlord and carefully listens to the landlord's own story of the persecutions he has had from the loyalists in the neighborhood. Various Tory families there, he asserts, have contrived in every way to thwart, vex, and distress him; and have got a thousand pounds sterling from him, at least, by informing the revenue officers of property they think ought to be taxed. But, says the landlord, though he loves peace and would be very glad to have the whole business set-

tled upon friendly terms, without bloodshed, he will venture his own life and spend all he has in the world before he will give up his rights!

Here is a sad case, indeed, of the high cost of clinging to one's right of Possession. With a serious look on his chubby countenance, the little lawyer pats the man on the shoulder heartily.

"Stick to it!" he cries.

When he is thirty-five, he takes a horseback ride of some two hundred miles, being run down in health, to visit some medicinal springs in Connecticut. On the way home, stopping in Middletown over Sunday, at a tavern kept by the widow Shaler, he sets down in his diary another of those simple, beautifully simple, passages that reveal so clearly the devotion of the man to his home, his family, his carefully-guarded possessions.

"Bespoke entertainment for the Sabbath at Shaler's," the passage runs, "and drank tea. She brought us in the finest and sweetest of wheat bread, and butter as yellow as gold, and fine radishes, very good tea and sugar. I regaled without reserve. But my wife is one hundred and fifty miles from me, at least, and I am not yet homeward bound. I wish Connecticut River flowed through Braintree! . . . I long to be at work in the orchard I have just added to my land;

I am impatient to begin my canal and bank, to convey the water all round by the road and the house; I must make a pool at the road by the corner of my land, at the yard in front of the house for the cool spring water to come into the road there, that the cattle and hogs and ducks may regale themselves there. . . ." As soon as he reaches home, he is obliged to start off on another business trip. . . . Two weeks of it, and he cries, "I feel myself weary of this wandering life; my heart is at home."

And in 1772 he again sets down that line of Shakespeare's that he has already quoted: "If I would but go to hell, for an eternal moment or so, I might be knighted." It sticks in his mind. Well he knows the price he is paying for adherence to his conviction that no Governor, no court, no Parliament, no king, can attack a man in his property. They had tried to buy him off by offering him the post of Advocate-General. Every day he sees other men gaining in wealth because they lick the hands that rule them. "They call us two, Sam and I, 'the brace of Adamses,' " he cries, tormented. "Is it not a pity that a brace of so obscure a breed should be the only ones to defend the household, when the pedigreed mastiffs and best-blooded hounds are all hushed to silence by the bones and crumbs that are thrown to them?"



Photo by Ewing Galloway, N. Y.

"QUITTING TIME" AT A GREAT COTTON-MILL

THERE will be two great parties, the rich against the poor, and the poor against the rich, as long as the world lasts," says this man Adams. How true his assertion is—so far—may be judged from the fact that during the ten-year period 1916-1926 the number of American workers directly involved in strikes against their employers has been, with the exception of three years only, never less than 1,200,000 yearly. Omitting 1919, when 4,000,000 workers were directly concerned in strikes, the average number on strike has been 1,100,000 a year.

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When he was on his journey of recuperation through Connecticut, he exclaimed: "I want to see *my* wife, *my* children, *my* farm, *my* horse, oxen, cows, walls, fences, workmen, office, books, and clerks!"—in short, everything that is *his*. And now he is just as badly off. They won't let him alone. He suffers from "a pain in the breast, and a complaint in my lungs," brought on from overwork; but here comes Sam Adams, and a friend to urge him to deliver an oration in Boston. But he refuses. An evening or two later—New Year's Eve, 1772—he spends the evening at his friend Cranch's. He is far from well, and his nerves are on edge. An Englishman present happens to refer to the burning of the sloop *Gaspe* at Providence by the angry New Englanders. Adams fires up at once. "I found the old warmth, heat, violence, acrimony, bitterness, sharpness of my temper and expression, was not departed. I said there was no more justice left in Britain than in hell; that I wished for war, and that the whole Bourbon family was upon the back of Great Britain; avowed a thorough disaffection to that country; wished that any thing might happen to them, and, as the clergy prayed of our enemies in time of war, that they might be brought to reason or to ruin."

No sooner has the overwrought man burst out in

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this passion, than he regrets the outburst. He upbraids himself bitterly for having no more control over his temper and his tongue than a boy. But what other can he expect, than ill health, nervousness, the ruin of his business? His whole soul beats with this passionate determination of the Me-person that no man shall trample on his rights; and to him who is thus blazing with Ego-ism, noble though it is, the cost of life is assuredly high.

THE BAKER HAD SEVEN SONS

I FIND this man Adams reading a book one morning, as I arrive at his house. He is laughing till the tears run down his chubby cheeks. I look over his shoulder. The book is "With a Camera in Tiger-Land," a new book, by a man named Champion. "What's so funny about tiger-hunting?" I ask.

"Nothing," gasps this man Adams, stifling his merriment. "The book is fine. I'm just laughing at something that it suggested. Here's what he says— 'The jungle tiger is not in any way dangerous, *except* (a) if it has been wounded, (b) if it anticipates attack, or the loss of its food when it is hungry, (c) if it is encountered in the breeding season, or (d) if it is a tigress with cubs.'"

And he explodes with laughter once again.

"Well?" says I, wondering. "Why is that so funny?"

"Because," gasps Mr. Adams, "because it's so exactly an account of the reasons why a nation goes to war! Tigers! Tigers, exactly! And 'under ordinary

circumstances,' the man says, they are 'not in any way dangerous!' "

"Look here," he went on, wiping his eyes, "when was a nation ever dangerous 'under ordinary circumstances?' If you leave out man-killers among nations, who make war out of sheer blood-thirstiness, just as this author omits man-killer tigers who kill out of wantonness, when did a nation ever go to war except for one of those four good reasons?"

Is this fancy? Not at all. This man Adams has never been under any illusions as to the absence of animal nature in man. Thickly scattered in his letters you find deductions that stamp him as an evolutionist a hundred years before Darwin, and a believer in vestigial animal passions in man a hundred and fifty years before the Behaviorist. He is a scientist. He is not merely "ahead of his time." He is ageless. He doesn't know how to die.

This man Adams plainly tells us, over and over, that the American colonies went to war because (a) they had been wounded in their pocket-books; (b) because they anticipated the loss of their food—their incomes from agriculture, manufactures, mercantile pursuits, fisheries, commerce—and this at a time when they were sharply hungry for such food; because (c)

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they were in the breeding season, and doing their best to populate their vast new lands; and (d) because they were as jealous of their property rights as a tigress is of her cubs.

On this theory, he might even have been ready to excuse England for all her actions harmful to the colonies. England, too, was a jungle tiger—hungry, breeding, fearful that the rebellious colonists meant to deprive her people of food, or the commerce that means food. Can one striped, ravenous, and frightened beast accuse another? Yet it does.

This man Adams has never been clever enough to disguise dull truths. When England attempted to increase her revenues in 1761, and thereby aroused the opposition which led to the American revolution, the strongest resentment of all, says Adams, arose from the publication of the orders for the strict enforcement of the act to tax molasses. Yes, says he, molasses, or melasses, or molosses, for by all these names it was designated in the British statutes.

“Wits may laugh,” says this man Adams, “at our fondness for molasses, and we all ought to join in the laugh with good humor. General Washington always asserted, and proved, that Virginians loved molasses as well as New Englanders did. *I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential*

ingredient in American independence. Many great events have proceeded from much smaller causes."

And what was the molasses chiefly used for? Mr. Adams continues with unabated frankness. He quotes, "from sure sources," the statement that twenty years after the war the infant republic, with a population of less than 9,000,000, is importing annually upwards of six million gallons of West India rum. "The Lord have mercy on us!" he exclaims. But he goes on to show that it is also importing every year nearly seven millions of gallons of molasses; "and as every gallon of molasses yields, by distillation, a gallon of rum, the rum imported, added to that distilled from molasses, is probably equal to twelve millions of gallons, which enormous quantity is chiefly consumed, besides whiskey, by citizens of the United States." "Again," exclaims Adams, "I devoutly pray, the Lord have mercy on us!"

He estimates that to tax the molasses imported in 1760, if it were no more than a million gallons, would have taken from the pockets of the colonies anywhere from \$100,000 to a quarter of a million dollars. And he says that the people simply would not tolerate such robbery.

Perhaps we may begin to see that properties, material objects, are giant soldiers who play their part

in wars quite as helpfully as men of flesh and blood. This man Adams sees this long before "this man Hoover." In ancient days, it was said that the stars in their courses fought for this individual hero or that. This man Adams well knows that goods, produce, manufactures, and markets, are better warriors for men than the aloof stars. He is a modern, a scientist.

Matter is not static, it is dynamic. Nay, more—it is dowered with *desire*! What is the desire of a single puny human being for food, ravenous though he may be, his whole being consumed with a shaking hunger; what is that desire when compared with the desire that burns in the breast of a million bushels of wheat? "I *must* be eaten!" cries the wheat. "Who dares to stop me in my imperative necessity? Let him beware! Who dare let me rot upon the ground, or in the bin? I am a Being, I am Power, I *must* proceed to my decreed sensuality. I live upon the hunger of Man. His hunger is my food. Hinder me not in moving toward my appointed delight, or ye shall perish!"

A trivial image, that of "the desire of the moth for the star!" A profounder poetry strides among the universe, its vast shoulders lost among the farthest stars. Even upon this little Earth of ours, there are magnificent movements in mass: The resistless flux and current of countless millions of tons of steel and

iron, welling up from the earth and pushing irresistibly down the valley-slopes of lands and seas; slow, ponderous, and resolute as glacier ice-fields; the sentient, persevering, unconquerable resolve of forests fringing a thousand mountain heights to feed their own hunger for death and change; the majestic desires of wood and stone and ores and grasses, over which man is *not* master, but whose slave he is. These are the Titans; in whose broad hands he is lifted, while he still imagines he is lord.

It is not alone the railway superintendent or the steamship company manager who frets and rages when goods heap up in freight yards or on the docks; the insensate freight itself is indignant at delay, impatient at congestion. "Keep the goods moving!" Motion is life. Every utilitarian product of the earth, like water from the subterranean spring, wells up and *demand*s the channels by which it may move to its ends. Little Man is no more than the servant of these vast, eyeless, mountainous Powers. Busily, he walks about among their hooves, no higher than their pasterns, grooms their hocks, and fancies he is on their backs. Sometimes, they trample on him, unaware. . . . They, too, are Me-Persons. They, too, are hungry Selves.

Among these Titan brothers of John Adams, born

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in America and insisting upon traveling abroad, there were seven who towered above all the others. Their names—and this is no mere fable for children—were:

Tobacco Tom
Ricefield Robert
Indigo Ike
Lumber Luke
Fisheries Frank
Grainsack Sam
and
Furry Phil

These seven giant brothers made up virtually the entire population of America.

Theirs was most of the wealth. Between them, they paid practically every dollar that went out for things imported from England. And in 1769, for example, this was twelve million dollars.

Tobacco Tom was by far the biggest of the seven. The tobacco grown in the southern colonies and shipped abroad in 1775 was worth \$4,000,000. The next in size among the brothers was Rice. Rice was worth nearly \$2,000,000 a year, at the beginning of the war. Wheat and Corn, the right and left arms of Grainsack Sam, had about the same strength, the

same degree of desire to roam about in quest of their natural food—the hungry man in England, or Europe. The other four brothers were about of a size, almost quadruplets—each had a million dollars' worth of vigor in him, each year.

Thus the big fellows strode in their might—Tobacco, Rice, Indigo, Lumber, Mackerel-and-Cod, Wheat-and-Corn, Furs-and-Pelts; and their smaller brothers were sizable cubs, and gave promise of growing to the true stature of Giants, in time. This man Adams kept his eyes on them all, big and little. He thought that he and the rest of the half million men in America owned them. But it is a question whether they did not own the colonists.

It is certain that this man Adams observed that they all carried muskets in the war. His observations make it easy to perceive that there are always such titan children of the Earth, in every age, in every war. Only their relative importance, in some instances, changes. Iron, and Steel, who were very small cubs indeed two centuries ago in America, are now the biggest Giants of the lot. And there is another mammoth, then not even born, named Oil. You may make your own lists, at your leisure. All that you care to observe just now is that a man who sees that there are

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always living Giants, though they are unseen by the census taker, is a man who is alive in any age.

History, it is said, is not yet accurate, but, tugging at its own boot-straps, it is struggling to make itself accurate. So far, the new historian says that he is unable to write history. So far, he is able merely to give advice, as to how it should be written. He himself cannot do it, he complains, because no one has gathered the facts he must have before he can proceed. The gathering, in this way and that, must be done by the scientist of the future. Today, he can merely point the way.

This man Adams is our leading scientist of this sort. He specializes in studying Self, in all its forms. His contemporaries are all dead, but, by this alone, not to mention other vitalities of his, he is as alive as the man who will be born tomorrow.

There were, of course, blind Giants in England, as well as the seven brothers in America. People in America were hungry for them, and they themselves in their own hunger for mouths must cross the Atlantic eastward. This man Adams has already mentioned Molasses, as being one of them. A much bigger one was Cloth. He was born in England and clamored to go to America, where people clamored for him to come.

Another was Tea. Another was Paper (a little fellow, but very important). Other tough little fellows were Oils, Glass, Paints, and Lead. Another was Gold and Silver Money, terribly scarce in the colonies.

"I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence."

People grow hysterical in the face of these giants stalking about among them. Their hunger for them is rooted in their very souls, and they are helpless to resist it. For a time they try to root out their hunger for Cloth, by agreeing not to import any from England—but it is useless, they must satisfy that hunger, they break the agreement, and buy in spite of their judgment. They struggle like birds in a net, beating their wings frantically. The giants continue to move calmly to and fro.

In their hysteria, citizens of Boston disguise themselves and empty into the harbor-waters of Boston a finger or two that they slash from the hand of the giant Tea. John Adams says that he had no part in this act. But he cannot conceal his delight over it. He writes immediately, in ecstasy:

"The die is cast. The people have passed the river and cut away the bridge. Last night three cargoes of tea were emptied into the harbor. This is the grand-

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est event which has ever yet happened since the controversy with Britain opened. *The sublimity of it charms me!*"

And so it is, sublime. But its chief usefulness is in its help toward causing the active rupture. In his diary of the same date, while continuing to refer to the destruction of the tea as "the most magnificent movement of all," this man Adams now wishes to go further. This, he says, is "only" an attack upon Property. . . . And he adds: "Another similar exertion of popular power may produce the destruction of *lives*. . . ."

Ominous lightning is flickering all over the sky, by now. The gathering clouds are black as ink. And in the midst of his daily record of fears that a storm is inevitable, his hopes that it will prove inevitable, his stubborn persistence in defying every effort to infringe upon the rights of himself and all other Me-Persons, he sets down these quiet words, that are terrifying as a glare of lightning over the whole sky:

"1774. February 28. I purchased of my brother my father's homestead, and house where I was born. The house, barn, and thirty-five acres of land, of which the homestead consists, and eighteen acres of pasture in the North Common, cost me four hundred and forty pounds. This is a fine addition to what I

had there before of arable and meadow. The buildings and the water I *wanted* very much; that beautiful, winding, meandering brook, which runs through this farm, always delighted me. How shall I improve it? Shall I try to introduce fowl-meadow, and herds-grass into the meadows? or still better, clover and herds-grass? I must ramble over it and take a view. . . .”

Terrifying words, because so quietly and blamelessly Selfish. Terrifying, because there are five hundred thousand other such homesteads in America, each inhabited by an Individual who is likewise resolutely and blamelessly Selfish.

Is there something majestic in the spectacle of Ben Franklin as he stands beneath a thunder-storm and brings down from the skies that unknown Power along a dripping thread of silk? And here there are five hundred thousand threads stretching upward from five hundred thousand farms and shops and offices into a sky surcharged with Power.

A few months earlier he had written: “It has been my fate to be acquainted in the way of my business with a number of very rich men—Gardiner, Bowdoin, Pitts, Hancock, Rowe, Lee, Sargent, Hooper, Doane. But there is not one of all these who derives more pleasure from his property than I do from *mine*;

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my little farm, and stock, and cash afford *me* as much satisfaction as all their immense tracts, extensive navigation, sumptuous buildings, their vast sums at interest, and stocks in trade yield to them. The pleasures of property arise from acquisition more than possession, from what is to come rather than from what is. . . . The rich are seldom remarkable for modesty, ingenuity, or humanity. Their wealth has rather a tendency to make them penurious and selfish. . . .”

The altercation between the English in England and the English in America—for as yet they are *all* English—continues and grows in bitterness, over the control of the movements of the insensate Giants who are born on opposite sides of the water. Must my giant pay to enter your house? Must I pay you to let your giant enter mine? So hot are the words, that the town of Boston is blockaded. Giants shall not pass in and out at all! Boston is starving in a hundred forms of hunger. This man Adams says indignantly that wholesale murder would be a less cruel thing than to turn famine (for Cloth, and Cash, and Tea, and Paints) into a populous city to devour its inhabitants by slow torments and lingering degrees. There is nothing local about the hunger for these giants, he observes. He points out that the commerce of the port (which

includes all sorts of giants) is an essential link in "a vast chain, which has made New England what it is the southern provinces what they are, the West India islands what they are, the African trade what it is, to say no more. The world will very soon see with horror, that this chain is broken by one blow."

Bills of lading, inventories, ledgers and invoices are dry reading; but they are the garments of the hottest-blooded and most excitable Giants alive upon the earth. Brown-faced Tobacco angrily wipes the sweat from his dripping forehead and faces scowling Tea, whose giant knuckles are knotted white. "Let me pass!" cries each one to the other.

What does throwing overboard a few pounds of tea amount to? There are, in the possession of the East India Company, *forty million* pounds on hand. Will you dam up Niagara? Inanimate goods are as hungry as flesh and blood.

And this man Adams tells us this. He will still be living, a thousand years from now.

Three

FACTORY - RIGHTS

X

STAGEHAND, SET THE PROPERTIES!

Now that I am on the stage, and the scene is soon to open,
what part shall I act?

John Adams, in his Diary

THE citizen who grows indignant at the scientist, because the scientist cannot see why a spade should not be called a spade, is excusable. The heritage of countless generations who have perversely (and naturally) elected to believe that a moon made of green cheese is more beautiful than the moon herself lies much too heavily upon us to be readily shaken off. The scientist is much more culpable; because he has not yet learned the knack of displaying the beauty of truth. He who asserts, as Professor Beard has, that the American government is not grounded upon some vague and not-to-be-analyzed motives labelled Patriotism, Unselfishness, and Lofty Principles, but upon easily understandable Selfishness, Private Interest, and Hunger, is inviting popular suspicion.

But is not Selfishness just as shiningly beautiful as Unselfishness? Is it not just as noble to chase a tres-

passer off your back-lot as it is to make the world safe for democracy? Is it not just as glorious to make sure that no one can keep you from eating a meal when you are hungry, as it is to say that it isn't refined to mention stomachs? Why don't we burst into cheers when we learn that a body of our fellow-citizens have fixed things so that the government bonds we buy can't ever be meddled with by people who don't own any? It's far from being a disgrace to want to keep a roof over one's head, decent furniture in the house, money in the bank for the children, and three square meals a day. But until you can clothe these utterly selfish desires with bright garments that befit their nobility, you had better not be a scientist, and you had better call them something else than selfish.

About noon on Wednesday, the tenth of August, 1774, four men climb into a stage-coach in Boston and start off for Philadelphia. For one of the four, it is a very long journey, the longest he has ever made in his life—and he is nearing his thirty-ninth birthday. He, John Adams, is on his way to build America.

He pretends, at first, to take this first Continental Congress playfully. He views it, says he, in a letter to his friend James Warren, a month or two before this

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departure, as a Goodness-knows-what. "I suppose you sent me there to school," he says. "I thank you for thinking me an apt scholar, or capable of learning. For my own part I am at a loss, totally at a loss, what to do when we get there; but I hope to be there taught. It is to be a school of political prophets, I suppose, a nursery of American Statesmen . . . I am for making it annual, and for sending an entire new set every year, that all the principal geniuses may go to the university in turn so that we may have politicians in plenty. . . . You and I have too many cares and occupations, and therefore we must teach our sons the divine science of the politics; and to be frank, I suspect they understand it better than we do. . . ." His own oldest son was then six years old.

No one made notes on the proceedings of this congress except this man Adams. And on the very first day it got to work he suggested that the actions of the assembly, the first united voice of America, be the product not only of the flesh and blood of the colonies but of the *property* of the colonists.

It created an immediate sensation, a favorable sensation. Cries of approval came from every corner of the room. The proposal to vote by population only was negatived. The proposal to vote by Colonies was vetoed. A general affirmative nodding of heads greets

Mr. Adams's suggestion that the amount of trade of each Colony, the quantity of its exports and imports, ought to be taken into consideration; and the only criticism of this is his own, that such a survey should be carefully and accurately made, and there is not time to do this in the emergency.

This is on September 5. Three days later, the Pennsylvanian, Galloway, utters on the floor of the Congress the axiom that "Power results from the real property (land) of the society." Mr. Adams records the observation. He has long held it as his own conviction. Within ten days, the very first committee of the Congress is appointed. It is a committee instructed to prepare a *Bill of Rights*. Mr. Adams is a member of it. It is made up of one member from each of the colonies. After several days of fruitless debating, one of its members, John Rutledge of South Carolina, says to Adams, "Adams, we must agree upon something—come, take the pen, and see if you can't produce something that will unite us."

So he takes a sheet of paper and draws up an article. The others don't like this or that feature of it; but they acknowledge that there is no hope of hitting on anything better, and they all agree to it. *Upon this paper depends the Union of the Colonies in its first form.*

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With alterations, it is adopted by the Congress as a whole, October 14, 1774. It precedes the Declaration of Independence, its son, by nine months.

He asserts in it that:

The right to make laws for the internal affairs of each colony resides in the Legislature of that Colony;

That all taxation without consent is illegal;

That the colonists "are entitled to life, liberty, and property; and they have never ceded to any sovereign power whatever a right to dispose of either, without their consent."

These remain among the fundamental principles of American government.

In these months he is working so incessantly, poring over so many volumes of legal authority, writing so many letters, so many articles, that he is at last attacked by an inflammation of the eyes, so violent that for a time he can neither write nor read. But in March, 1775, after all his accomplishments for liberty, both in Massachusetts and in the continental congress at Philadelphia, he is still ruthlessly forcing himself on, though he says, desperately:

"I have neither fortune, leisure, health, nor genius for public life. Being a man of desperate fortune, and a bankrupt in business, I cannot help putting my hand to the pump, now the ship is in a storm, and the

hold half full of water; but as soon as she gets into a calm, and a place of safety, I must leave her. At such a time as this, there are many dangerous things to be done, which nobody else will do, and therefore I cannot help attempting them."

Before he goes farther on his journey, may we stop the worried man for a moment and ask him what he thinks about taking a drink? It is a matter of no great moment, but one that he often refers to.

He is now nearly forty. When he was twenty-four, he had a flare-up of indignation against taverns and liquor-stores, crying out that in them "diseases, vicious habits, bastards, and legislators, are frequently begotten." His ranking of their evils in this ascending scale may be worth noting. . . . But before this, when he was at Harvard, he drank daily; and now that he himself is a legislator, and, at Philadelphia, meets legislators (like George Washington) who do not hesitate to broach barrels of whiskey and beer at election time, for the delight of their constituents, he says less about taverns.

He gives it as his carefully-considered belief, that the almost universal good health among the students at Harvard, while he was one of their number, was due largely to "the free use of hard cider and the very moderate use of wine and ardent spirits." He ex-

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presses the belief that "Rhenish or Moselle wine would be better for us than sherry or Madeira," and he is positive that hard cider—a year, or two years, or three years old—is better than either; for anybody, at any time of life. When he was admitted to practice as a lawyer in Boston, at the age of twenty-three, he invited all the lawyers he knew over to a tavern "to drink some punch," as a matter of course. An evening he spent with the Sons of Liberty, the radicals of 1766, is sped on, he notes, with punch and wine. He attends a big banquet of the Sons of Liberty in 1769 and records that although the 350 guests drank to *forty-five separate toasts* not a man was drunk. . . . On an unseasonably cold day in June, trying to shake off a cold, he drinks half a pint of wine at one tavern and two glasses at another. But it does him more harm than good, he says.

He is a light drinker for seventy years—but he takes a drink without compunction, whenever he chooses to. His moderation seems to be chiefly a question of liquor not agreeing with his stomach. Tobacco does not affect him so strongly, and he uses it heavily. He learns to chew tobacco when he is only eight years old, when out skating with other urchins on the ponds, and keeps it up steadily. The mother of one of his Harvard classmates expostulates with him

on the practice when he is twenty, and he bets her a pair of gloves that she will not see him take a chew for a month. He does not say who won the bet. But he goes on smoking and chewing incessantly, he admits cheerfully, for sixty years. This seems to be the difference between his habits and those of Washington—Adams smokes heavily, but drinks little; Washington drinks heavily (always “carrying it” easily) but doesn’t care to smoke. It is apparently merely a difference of physical ability.

And now, leaving home to go to the Philadelphia convention, Mr. Adams’s diary records that he is entertained with punch and wine at Hartford, with a glass of wine by the president of Princeton College, and, in William Barrell’s store in Philadelphia, drinks punch and eats dried smoked sprats with the proprietor. Then the banquets begin! That day, September 3, 1774, after an elegant supper at Mr. Mifflin’s mansion, with Lee and Harrison from Virginia, Dr. Witherspoon, the president of Princeton, Dr. Shippen, Dr. Steptoe and an unnamed gentleman:

“We drank sentiments (toasts) till eleven o’clock. Lee and Harrison were very high. Lee had dined with Mr. Dickinson, and drank Burgundy the whole afternoon.

“September 7. Wednesday. Dined with Mr. Miers

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Fisher, a young Quaker and a lawyer. . . . This plain Friend and his plain though pretty wife, with her Thees and Thous, had provided us with the most costly entertainment: ducks, hams, chickens, beef, pig, tarts, creams, custards, jellies, fools, trifles, floating islands, beer, porter, punch, wine, and a long &c. . . .”

“Thursday. Dined at Mr. Powell’s—a most sinful feast again! every thing which could delight the eye or allure the taste: curds and creams, jellies, sweetmeats of various sorts, twenty sorts of tarts, fools, trifles, floating islands, whipped sillabubs, &c. &c., Parmesan cheese, punch, wine, porter, beer, &c. At evening we climbed up the steeple of Christ Church. . . .

“September 14, Wednesday. Dined with Dr. Cox. A mighty feast again: nothing less than the very best of Claret, Madeira, and Burgundy. . . .

“September 22. Thursday. Dined with Mr. Chew, Chief Justice of the Province, with all the gentlemen from Virginia, Dr. Shippen, Mr. Tilghman, and many others. We were shown into a grand entry and staircase, and into an elegant and most magnificent chamber, until dinner. About four o’clock, we were called down to dinner. The furniture was all rich. Turtle, and every other thing, flummery, jellies, sweetmeats of twenty sorts, trifles, whipped sillabubs, floating

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islands, fools, &c. and then a dessert of fruits, raisins, almonds, pears, peaches. Wines most excellent and admirable. I drank Madeira at a great rate, and found no inconvenience in it. . . .

"October 20. Thursday. Dined with the whole Congress, at the City Tavern, at the invitation of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania. The whole House dined with us, making near one hundred guests in the whole; a most elegant entertainment. A sentiment was given: 'May the sword of the parent never be stained with the blood of her children.' Two or three broad-brims (Quakers) over against me at table; one of them said, this is not a toast, but a prayer; come, let us join in it. And they took their glasses accordingly.

"Friday. Dined at the Library Tavern, with Messrs. Markoe and a dozen gentlemen from the West Indies and North Carolina. A fine bowling-green here; fine turtle, and admirable wine."

Here are later entries:

"November 11, 1777. Tuesday. Dined at Fishkill, at the Dr.'s mess. It was a feast: salt pork and cabbage, roast beef and potatoes, and a noble suet pudding, grog, and a glass of Port.

"March 31, 1778. Tuesday. Lying in the River of Bordeaux (on the American frigate *Boston*, on which

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he was arriving in France as American Commissioner). This morning the captain and a passenger came on board the *Boston*, from the *Julie*, a large ship bound to San Domingo, to make us a visit. They invited us on board to dine. (After dinner, on board the *Julie*, we had) Dutch cheese, then a dish of coffee, then a French cordial; and wine and water, excellent claret with our dinner.

"April 1. Wednesday. This morning I took leave of the ship and went up to town (Pauillac) . . . We dined there in the fashion of the country: we had fish and beans, and salad, and claret, champagne, and mountain wine.

"April 9 (the day after his arrival in Paris). Thursday. Came home (after dining with the venerable Duchess d'Enville and others), and supped with Dr. Franklin on cheese and beer . . .

"May 13, 1779. (On his return voyage to America, on board the *Alliance* frigate, Captain Landais). Went on shore (at L'Orient) and dined with Captain Jones (John Paul Jones) at the *Épée Royale*; an elegant dinner we had, and all very agreeable. (There were eighteen gentlemen present, including four naval captains and three officers of John Paul Jones's famous ship, the *Poor Richard*.) "No very instructive conversation; but we practiced the old

American custom of drinking to each other, which I confess is always agreeable to me . . .

"December 19, 1779. (At Corunna, Spain, returning from America.) "Sunday. Dined with Monsieur Destournelles, the French consul. . . . We had every luxury. But the wines were Bordeaux, Champagne, Burgundy, Sherry, Alicant, Navarre, and *Vin de Cap*, the most delicious in the world. . . .

"December 30. Thursday. At Lugo, where we arrived yesterday, two Irish gentlemen came to pay their respects to me—Michael Meagher O'Reilly, and Lewis O'Brien. O'Brien afterwards sent me a meat-pie and a mince-pie and two bottles of Frontenac wine, which gave us a fine supper. . . . We are obliged in this journey to carry our own beds, blankets, sheets, pillows, &c.; our own provisions of chocolate, tea, sugar, meat, wine, spirits, and every thing that we want.

"October 26, 1782. (Returning to Paris from The Hague.) Saturday. We took a cutlet and glass of wine, at ten, at Chantilly.

"July 26, 1796. (He is now sixty years old, and at home again in his little Massachusetts village.) Tuesday. In conformity to the fashion, I drank this morning and yesterday morning about a gill of cider; it seems to do me good. . . .

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"Thursday. I continue my practice of drinking a gill of cider in the morning, and find no ill, but some good effects."

At the same age, he stoutly defends the temperate use of wines and hard cider—whose alcoholic content frequently exceeds, it may be noted, that of wine. He writes, on February 19 of that year:

"Many of the longest Livers and healthiest Men that I have known, have made a free use of this Liquor (cider) all their days, for example, the venerable old Champion of Calvinism and Athanasianism, the Reverend Dr. Niles of Monatiquot, was all his days a Lover and liberal Drinker of it. One of his Parish drolly said: 'Our Mr. Niles would not drink a drop of Rum for the World, but he will drink as much Cyder as any Indian.' This Gentleman lived till near ninety I believe and always remarkably healthy and hardy. . . . When was a healthier Man than Dr. Hitchcock of Pembroke, and who made a more constant and liberal Use of it always however with temperance? To these I could add many other Examples. . . .

"I have, habitually drank the Wines of Spain, France, Germany and Holland in all their varieties, diluted with Water, and I have drank the mild Porter and Table Beer of London in all their perfection; but

I never found any of them agree so well with my health as the Cyder of New England. It is true I seldom drink it under a year old, and often two and sometimes three."

"*Buvons, ecrivons, vivons!*" So he urges, in a letter to his dear friend, Waterhouse.

"*Vivons, ecrivons, aimons, buvons!*" So he repeats it, three years later, in a letter to another crony.

"Let us drink, let us scribble, let us live!" "Let us live, let us scribble, let us love, let us drink!"

Is this a President of the United States, who is trolling this merry philosophy? Yes, he is the man whom Calvin Coolidge calls "the *soul* of Puritan idealism."

Isn't the man ever going to die?

WHEN YOU NEED A GOD, CREATE HIM

NEXT to being born oneself, the most wonderful thing in the world, one supposes is, to give birth to another person. It is an agony to be a creator, but imperative. Those who have not given birth, have agonized too little.

In September, 1774, it became imperative for John Adams to have a son. He wanted to bear this son; and what this man Adams *wanted*, he must have. Nine months later he bore his son. . . .

A gorgeous young dandy, twenty-four years old, rode up on horseback from Virginia to Boston in 1756. He was rich as Croesus, or as young John Hancock, and, wearing the red coat of a British officer, he had fought the French and Indians in the Pennsylvania wilderness. He reached New York on February 15 and left ten days later; reached Boston about March 1 and stayed there eleven days. Of this ride, Rupert Hughes records:

"A more gorgeous dandy never rode than the Col-

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onel Washington of 1756. . . . It can be imagined how the woman fell before him. . . . He went to 'Mrs. Barons rout' in New York city. . . . He lost 8 shillings at cards there, one night; also he did a good deal of shopping. He paid twelve pounds ten 'for a Hatt'; a 'Taylors Bill of ninety-five seven and three; and for 'Silver Lace' almost ninety-five pounds. . . . For one night in Rhode Island he gives the servants four pounds *and damages*. . . . For his eleven-day stay in Boston he gave the chambermaid a bit over a guinea. . . . He had worse luck at cards than in New York, for he says he lost three pounds on one occasion and one pound two-and-six on another."

Sixty miles from Boston at the time is another young man. Young Mr. Adams has not yet reached his twenty-first birthday. He has no income, except the few shillings he is earning as teacher of a little school in Worcester. On ninety-five pounds, spent carelessly for silver lace, he could live a year. He has just begun keeping a diary, and here are some of its entries, for those very dates:

"February 15, 1756. Sunday. Staid at home reading the Independent Whig.

"February 18. Wednesday. Spent an hour in the beginning of the evening at Major Gardiner's"—discussing religion.

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"21. Saturday. Snow ankle deep. Copied Tillotson's *Sermons*.

"22. Sunday. Heard Thayer—he preached well. Spent the evening at Colonel Chandler's, in conversation upon the present situation of public affairs, with a few observations concerning heroes and great commanders—Alexander, Charles XII, Cromwell.

"27. Friday. All day in high health and spirits. Copying Tillotson's *Sermons*. That comet which appeared in 1682 is expected again this year; and we have intelligence that it has been seen about ten days since, near midnight, in the east." (Probably at Mrs. Baron's dance, dressed in silk and silver lace.)

"28. Saturday. Attended Mrs. Brown's funeral.

"March 7. Sunday. Heard Mr. Maccarty preach, all day.

"12. Friday. Laid a pair of gloves with Mrs. Willard (mother of one of my classmates at Harvard) that she would not see me chew tobacco this month.

"15. Monday. I sometimes in my sprightly moments consider myself, in my great chair at school, as some dictator at the head of a commonwealth. In this little state I can discover all the great geniuses, all the surprising actions and revolutions of the world, in miniature. I have several renowned generals but three feet high. . . ."

On this date, young Mr. Washington, twice three feet high, was trotting gorgeously on his way home to Virginia, his head full of pleasant memories of a fortnight full of pretty girls, dances, balls, wine, cards, and whatnot. Young Mr. Adams's diary continues:

"March 17. Wednesday. A fine morning. Proceeded on my journey toward Braintree. Arrived home about sunset."

Thus, in their twenties, these two youths who were to become the two greatest men in America, the younger one the father of the older one, missed each other by a day or two and a mile or two. But their lives approached each other inexorably.

On the afternoon of August 29, 1774, a dust-covered stage-coach on its way to Philadelphia reached a tavern in Frankfort, five miles out of town. In it were Thomas Cushing, Robert Treat Paine, Samuel Adams and John Adams, four delegates from Massachusetts to the continental congress about to convene in Philadelphia.

As the coach rolled up and came to a stop, a half dozen or more gentlemen who had ridden out from the city to meet the four men came forward and greeted them. Philadelphia was full of Tories, but these men were not. They were active Sons of Liberty,

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and they had taken the trouble to come out this far in order to whisper a word of warning to the Massachusetts men. They asked if they might not have a quiet talk, then and there.

"We invited them to take tea with us in a private apartment in the tavern," says John Adams. "They asked leave to give us some information and advice, which we thankfully granted.

"They represented to us that the friends of the British government in Boston and in the eastern colonies, in their correspondence with their friends in Pennsylvania and all the southern colonies, had represented us as four desperate adventurers. 'Mr. Cushing was a harmless kind of man,' according to these informers, 'but poor, and wholly dependent on his popularity for his subsistence. Mr. Samuel Adams was a very artful, designing man, but desperately poor, and wholly dependent on his popularity with the lowest vulgar for his living. (He was, actually, a journeyman wireworker, earning perhaps fifty cents a day.) John Adams and Mr. Paine were two young lawyers, of no great talents, reputation, or weight, who had no other means of raising themselves into consequence, than by courting popularity. We were all (all four of us) suspected of having independence in view.'

“‘Now,’ said our Philadelphia friends, ‘you must not utter the word independence, or give the least hint or insinuation of the idea, either in Congress or in private conversation! If you do, you are undone! For the idea of independence is as unpopular in Pennsylvania, and in all the Middle and southern colonies, as the Stamp Act itself. No man *dares* to speak of it! Moreover, you are representatives of the suffering State. Boston and Massachusetts are under a rod of iron. British fleets and armies are tyrannizing over you; you yourselves are personally obnoxious to them and all the friends of the British government; you have been long persecuted by them all; your feelings have been hurt, your passions excited; you are thought to be *too* warm, *too* zealous, *too* sanguine. You *must*, therefore, be very cautious; you *must* not come forward with any bold measures, you *must* not pretend to take the lead! You know Virginia is the most populous colony of all the thirteen. They are very proud of their ‘ancient Dominion,’ as they call it; they think they have a right to take the lead, and the southern colonies, and the Middle colonies too, are too much disposed to yield it to them.’

“Well! This was plain dealing, and no mistake! Imagine how we four sat and looked at each other. Here was plenty to think over, and grimly, too. We

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did think it over. And I must confess that there appeared so much wisdom and good sense in it that it made a *deep* impression on my mind, and it had an equal effect on all my colleagues.

"We then rode on into Philadelphia, and, dirty, dusty, and fatigued as we were, we could not resist the importunity to go to the city Tavern, the most genteel one in America. There we were introduced to a number of other gentlemen of the city: Dr. Shippen, etc., etc.—"

The very next day, John Adams heard George Washington's name mentioned. The delegation from Virginia had not yet reached town, but Thomas Lynch, a delegate from South Carolina, had passed through Virginia on his way north and is able to give John Adams some first-hand news. He says that Colonel Washington had made a most eloquent speech in favor of extending aid to Massachusetts in her opposition to the measures proposed by England. "Says he," according to Lynch's narrative, "I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston!"

This having been recorded that night in Adams's diary, one would naturally suppose that he would be on the lookout for Washington's arrival in Phila-

delphia—which occurred a day or two later—and record his first meeting with him immediately. But he doesn't. They undoubtedly met each other daily, from September 1 on through the month. Both were daily attending the sessions of the Congress, in Carpenters' Hall, there at Fifth and Chestnut. But Adams thinks so carelessly of George Washington that he never even mentions him, even after hearing that hot, impetuous promise of support.

The Virginia delegation reaches town; Adams tells of meeting its members—naming most of them, but not Washington; Adams notes the debates daily taking place in Congress, naming the speakers, but never naming Washington as being among them; Adams records daily his invitations to dinners, naming the various members of the Congress who are invited guests with him, but Washington never seems to be among them.

During this month, he meets all the Virginia delegation. Of Peyton Randolph, he notes that Randolph is Speaker of the Virginia Assembly, and is "a large, well looking man." Of Colonel Richard Henry Lee, he notes that Lee "is a tall, spare man—a masterly man." Of Colonel Bland, he notes that Bland is "a learned, bookish man." And of all of them, on their

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first meeting, he observes that "these gentlemen from Virginia appear to be most spirited and consistent of any"—but he does *not* make any mention of Colonel Washington.

The inference seems thoroughly justified: Washington is not yet regarded as having reached a stature, either as a soldier or as a statesman, sufficient to cause the passionately anxious Adams to rank him as one of the leaders; and it was always leaders that Adams sought to win over first. He is thirty-nine years old, he has been practicing law for sixteen years, and he knows his business. On the very day of his arrival in Philadelphia, he has inquired of Thomas McKean and learned that the Congress is to consist of "about fifty-six members, twenty-two of them lawyers." Obviously he will at once set out to discover which of these exert the greatest influence, and which of the influential he can bring over to his side; and obviously he has not concluded, in a whole month of such study, that Washington is worth noting among them. The omission of his name is eloquent.

But at last, on September 28, the two meet unmistakably. Early that afternoon, Adams is one of the dinner-guests at the mansion of the rich Mr. Richard Penn—"a magnificent house, and a most splendid

feast, and a very large company." But Colonel Washington is still not mentioned as being one of this large company.

"Spent the evening at home," Adams records in his diary, late that night, "with Colonel Lee, Colonel Washington, and Dr. Shippen, who came in to consult with us."

"At home" may mean the lodging-house conducted by Miss Jane Port, in Arch Street, about half way between Front and Second streets in Philadelphia, or "Mrs. Yard's," Adams's later lodgings in the same neighborhood. A memorial might well be there erected: for here, on that night, John Adams looked at George Washington and decided to give birth to him.

In the tavern, the four Massachusetts men are earnestly chatting among themselves. At the afternoon banquet at Mr. Penn's mansion, they had met those two great figures, the rich and powerful John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, and the celebrated soldier, General Charles Lee, of Virginia. There is a knock on the door. Dr. Shippen, the Philadelphian, ushers in two far less famous individuals—Colonel Richard Henry Lee, and George Washington.

As John Adams rises from his chair and shakes hands, the differences between the heights of the two

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men is striking. Adams's height, he says, is "five feet, seven or nine inches, I really know not which." His sensitiveness about his stature is so apparent in this statement of his that it is doubtful if he overtops five feet by even so much as seven inches. Washington, giant-shouldered, with huge hands, huge feet, six feet three inches tall, looms over him by a full head.

One wonders if envy did not flash through Adams's mind at the moment. He himself had dreamed of being a soldier, when he was in his 'teens. But he had had to give up that dream. One could not hope for a career in military life, in those days, unless one could exert enough influence through powerful connections to be given a company and thus to qualify as an officer. And there were no such connections in young Adams's family.

And here is a Big Fellow so rich that he had not only more than carried his share in officers' messes, but can talk carelessly of equipping a thousand men at his own expense! A man who wears fine clothes, silver lace, silver buckles, silk stockings. A man who has had poured on his lap everything that John Adams has been denied! He might well have felt a pang of envy at that instant.

But he need not have. At that moment, little John Adams is taller than big George Washington. He is the

bigger man, in the deliberations of the country. He is not seeking out George Washington—George Washington is seeking out *him*. For four weeks past, there has scarcely been a minute in which the great men and great ladies of Philadelphia have not been hanging on the neck of this busy little lawyer. He has been constantly in demand at dinners, where the guests are all leaders—and he has not once named Washington as being one of those guests.

What, then, is the reason for this evening call?

John Adams never troubles himself to explain it; but Washington does, in a letter which he writes ten or twelve days later.

On that very day, the twenty-eighth of September, 1774—the day whose evening is marked by the call of the two Virginians, Lee and Washington—on that very day, there has been introduced into the colonial congress the most dangerous proposal that had yet been laid before it; a measure cunningly designed to put an end once and for all to the idea of separation from Great Britain, a measure which, if adopted, would have utterly wrecked all dreams of independence; a measure so craftily introduced, so plausibly argued, that its ultimate defeat seems almost a miracle.

The minds of the two Virginians and the four Massachusetts men, sitting together that night, there in

John Adams's lodgings, were inevitably thinking of this scheme, for they had been listening to its debate all that day.

The scheme was the "plan of a proposed union between Great Britain and the Colonies." It had been put forth by one Joseph Galloway, a delegate from Pennsylvania, the hesitating colony.

Galloway was one of those men of property who feared that further defiance of England would mean the loss of that wealth. He disapproved of the attitude of the Massachusetts men, but had managed to get himself made a delegate to the convention, apparently with the idea of helping to restrain any extreme action. Defeated, in 1776 he openly joined the royalist forces in New York.

But at that moment he could still rally not a few who were of his way of thinking. His proposal came perilously close to adoption. "It was defeated by the close vote of six Colonies to five," so plausible it was, so ably presented.

Briefly, his proposition was: There *must* be, in every government, a supreme, central, power; it was obvious that no Colony would surrender any of its sovereignty to another, and it was inconceivable that a satisfactory union of the Colonies could be devised; and therefore it was imperative that they once more

“come to terms” with Great Britain, only holding out for a new “British-American Legislature,” to be formed, by which laws agreeable both to England and the colonies could be assured.

The Massachusetts men, listening to this argument and observing the friendliness with which it was received, must have felt their hearts sink. But, remembering the advice that had been given them at the Frankfort tavern, they sat grimly silent. They were on thin ice, at that moment, perilously thin. It was no time at which to leap up and hotly demand what they themselves inwardly desired—severance from England. They gripped themselves. Adams, who noted the remarks of all the chief speakers that day, does not mention that a single one of the Massachusetts delegation spoke a word.

But the Virginian, Colonel Lee, spoke; and Adams observed that Lee did not wholly reject the subtle poison. And now Lee knocks at the tavern door!

From Washington’s letter to Captain Mackenzie, it is evident that Washington himself is the one who has sought the meeting. The big, rawboned Virginian, his face tanned deep with exposure to wind and weather, from campaigns in the wilderness, from a life of following the foxhounds over his Virginia estates, comes rather sheepishly and bashfully into the

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room, to be introduced to the four wise men from New England. He towers a full head over John Adams. But something has been puzzling him. He is a little bewildered. He has been remembering his own impetuous offer to march with a thousand men to the aid of Boston. The Congress has been sitting now for a whole month—and what do all their discussions mean? “Do they mean independence of England? Do the people of Massachusetts, Mr. Adams, want independence? If they do, I am a little afraid that I can’t go that far, Sir—I want my rights, but I want them *as an Englishman*. And, you know, Sir, a great many persons keep saying to me that you of Massachusetts are for rebellion and independence! Won’t you make it all clear to me?”

Mr. Adams thinks like lightning. He looks at the big, puzzled soldier, towering over him, and smiles reassuringly. This is what he says in a letter to Willam Tudor, written next day:

“I have represented to the delegates, whenever I see them, the utter impossibility of four hundred thousand people (those of Massachustts) existing long without a legislature, or courts of justice. They all seem to acknowledge it . . . but nothing more is done.

“We have numberless prejudices to remove here.

We have been obliged to act with great delicacy and caution. We have been obliged to keep ourselves out of sight, and to feel pulses, and to sound the depths; to insinuate our sentiments, designs, and desires, by means of other persons, sometimes of one province, and sometimes of another."

And so he now smiles up at the tall Virginia colonel, who stands there a bit embarrassed by his own doubts, and relieves his worries. And Washington writes in substance to Captain Mackenzie:

"Why, Bob, it's all wrong! These people who have been telling me that the Massachusetts men want to set up an independent nation have been gulling me! They've been grossly abusing my confidence in them, for it isn't so, at all! I went straight to John Adams himself and found out. I asked him the question, point-blank. . . . Setting up for independency and whatnot, indeed. *From my personal knowledge*, I can now assure you that it is *not* the wish of that government, or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence. . . . No such thing is desired by any *thinking* man in all North America. . . ."

And so he is quieted, for the time being. John Adams does not need him just yet. Things are not ripe for what John Adams, who is "a thinking man," really

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desires. But he has looked at the big fellow, face to face; he has "sized him up" in a flash; he "cottons" to him. In that instant, George Washington is conceived. "*I will make that man my son,*" says John Adams to himself.

He bids Lee and his son-to-be goodnight without having alarmed them by hot talk of independence. They go away satisfied. But Adams bursts out next day, in a letter for his wife's eyes alone.

"Patience, forbearance, long suffering!" he exclaims. It is plain that he cannot contain himself much longer.

But he does, and for a whole month longer, till the Congress is over, and he goes home to Braintree. Never once does he mention this Colonel Washington again, in all that time, in all his copious notes. So ends 1774.

But never think that Adams has forgot him.

Things are far different the next year. When Congress meets again, eight months later, the Massachusetts delegates, entering New York on their way to Philadelphia, "were met by a great number of gentlemen in carriages and on horseback, and all the way their numbers increased, till I thought the whole city was come out to meet us. The same ardor was continued all the way to Philadelphia. Congress assembled and proceeded to business, and the members appeared

to me to be of one mind, and that mind after my own heart."

How hot, and how throbbing that heart! Hot with *desire!*

But in spite of this enthusiasm of many, all was not easy sledding. The date for the opening of Congress was May 5, but, though it convened punctually, the entire month of May and the first two weeks of June passed with so little of true action in Congress—action of a sort to suit those delegates that burned for immediate movement against England—that John Adams is daily growing more and more impatient, closer and closer to the boiling-over point. The principal devil behind all these delays, he was convinced, was the wealthy and powerful Philadelphian, John Dickinson. Adams does at last boil over, does at last flatly quarrel with Dickinson, does thereupon bring down upon himself all the venom of the pro-British faction—and they were indeed powerful in Philadelphia; but in all these matters, which he minutely records, there is but one mention of the man Washington.

This is in a letter to his wife, dated May 29. "The military spirit running through the continent is amazing," he cries, in a mood of hopefulness that the war-like spirit of New England is spreading through the colonies. "Colonel Washington appears every day *in*

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his uniform, and by his great experience and ability in military matters, is of much service to all."

Mid-June approaches. Adams is, by now, fairly frothing—inwardly—at the delays. Outwardly, he manages to keep cool.

"When, in the beginning of May, Congress met," he later writes, "no man knew whether the skirmish at Concord, the battle of Lexington (which had occurred only two weeks before) or the assembly of an army of militia at Cambridge and the other neighborhoods of Boston, in hostile array against His Majesty's regular, disciplined, and veteran troops and fleets, would be approved or condemned by that Continental Assembly (which I was then attending, in Philadelphia). The New England militia were ready to drive the British army into the sea; and if their first ardor had not been restrained by considerations (of the fact that their delegates at the Philadelphia congress were convinced that all thirteen colonies should first be united, before the war was carried further) they would have done it! But those of their delegates who had been members of the Congress before, that is, in 1774, and now met the same gentlemen again, I assure you had great reasons for doubts and apprehensions, fears and jealousies.

"The army at Cambridge had poor arms, no can-

non but the batteries nicknamed 'the Hancock' and 'the Adams,' no tents, no barracks, no provisions but from day to day, no clothing for change, no stores, very little powder, and but few bullets. And Congress *could not be brought to look the crisis in the face!*"

And on June 10, he writes, despairing of any united action by the Philadelphia congress:

"We *cannot* force events!"

This whole letter, a private letter to his friend Moses Gill, chairman of the committee of supplies, Cambridge, is the tortured cry of a man driven to extremity by the maddening indecision of others. It follows:

"DEAR SIR:—It would be a relief to my mind, if I could write freely to you concerning the sentiments, principles, facts, and arguments which are laid before us in Congress; but injunctions and engagements of honor render this impossible. What I learn out of doors among citizens, gentlemen, and persons of all denominations, is not so sacred. I find that the general sense abroad is to prepare for a vigorous *defensive* war, but at the same time to keep open the door of reconciliation; to hold the sword in one hand and the olive branch in the other; to proceed with warlike measures and conciliatory measures *pari passu*.

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"I am myself as fond of reconciliation, *if* we could reasonably entertain hopes of it upon a constitutional basis, as any man. But I think, if we consider the education of the Sovereign, and that the Lords, the Commons, the electors, the army, the navy, the officers of excise, customs, &c. &c., have been now for many years gradually trained and disciplined by corruption to the system of the court, we shall be convinced that the cancer is too deeply rooted and too far spread to be cured by any thing short of cutting it out *entire*. . . .

"However, this continent is a vast, unwieldly machine. We cannot force events. . . .

"In my opinion, powder and artillery are the most efficacious, sure, and infallible conciliatory measures we can adopt. . . .

"Pray write me by every opportunity, and beseech my friends to write. Pray write me minutely the state of the people of Boston, and of our army. Every letter I receive does great good. *The gentleman to whom most letters from our province are addressed, has not leisure to make the best use of them.*"

In the last sentence one senses his gathering impatience with his colleague and friend, John Hancock. And his impatience with *all* the hesitators is as great.

"Congress *could not* be brought to look the crisis in the face," he resumès. "It was easy to see that the members dared not, either on the one hand, to command or advise the assemblage about Boston to disperse and go home, or, on the other, to approve and adopt it as a continental army. A *majority* of them lived in hourly expectation of news that the British troops had marched out of the town of Boston and scattered the militia of New England, at Cambridge, to the four winds.

"But when days and weeks passed away, and, instead of any such intelligence, all accounts agreed that the Britons were completely imprisoned in the town, they began to think what must be done, and the people began to be clamorous that something *should* be done.

"Should they give up the contest? NO! The people, at least the Whigs, out of doors and in their own colonies, would stone them. . . .

"Should they adopt the army at Cambridge, or raise a new one of their own? The latter project would require a long time, and it was very uncertain whether it would *ever* be practicable."

We have arrived at the tremendous knot. It is a knot bigger than a mountain, the most awe-compelling Knot in the whole story of American

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independence. A vast, gigantic, cloud-towering shadow, it looms directly in front of us, blocking our way.

This is the week of June 10, 1775.

And who is bold enough to march straight at it, shatter the fearful cloud with an explosion of words, demonstrate that it is nothing but a miserable mist, like *all* Fears?

This is the moment when little John Adams is about to give birth. He cannot any longer restrain his groans of travail. In this week, he will give birth to The American Colossus. . . .

"If," he resumes his cry, "the Congress adopted the army now on foot, *who* should command it?

"A New England army, under a New England General, they were pleased to say, would be dangerous to the other colonies, for no man dared utter the word *State* or *nation*. Who, then, would be General?

"We were embarrassed with more than one difficulty: not only with the party in favor of a last petition to the King, and the party who were jealous for independence, but a third party—which was a Southern party, against a Northern, and a jealousy against a new England army under the command of a New England General.

"Whether this jealousy was sincere, or whether it

was mere pride and a haughty ambition of furnishing a southern General to command the northern army, I cannot say; but the intention was very visible to me that Colonel Washington was their object, and so many of our staunchest men were in the plan (those men, whether northern or southern, who were staunchest in favor of defying England) that we could carry nothing without conceding to it.

"Who, then, should be general? On this question, the members were greatly divided. A number were for Mr. Hancock, of Massachusetts, then President of Congress, and extremely popular throughout the United Colonies, and called 'King Hancock' all over Europe. A greater number (can you believe it?) were for General Charles Lee, of Virginia, then in Philadelphia, extremely assiduous in his visits to all the members of Congress at their lodgings, and universally represented in America as a classical and universal scholar, as a scientific soldier, and as one of the greatest generals in the world, who had seen service with Burgoyne in Portugal and in Poland, &c., and who was covered over with wounds he had received in battles. In short, this General Lee . . . excited much enthusiasm and made many proselytes and partisans.

"A number were for Washington.

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"But the greatest number were for Ward."

Here are fancies. Here are curious speculations. What controlled the fall of the dice? Any one of the three, Hancock, Lee, Ward, *might* have become commander of the first American forces, rather than the fourth man. Why, you wonder idly, isn't it John Hancock whom Destiny chose? Or Charles Lee, to be Fortune's favorite? Or Artemas Ward, to be the child of Fate?

Because there is no such thing as Destiny, when this man Adams is in the vicinity. There is no such thing as Fortune, when this man Adams is warming up. And Fate was not having any children that day, thank you; this man Adams was pacing up and down, groaning and gritting his teeth; and if there is any lying-in bed to be had that day, *he* is reserving it.

"In the midst of this chaos, the anxiety of New England's members in Congress may well be imagined, may easily be conceived," writes Mr. Adams. We do not have to imagine it. Because, to save us that trouble, the exact scene has been pictured for us, by the man himself.

The place is the red brick building that stands on Chestnut Street, with the public square stretching southward to Walnut Street. . . . In an upper room,


thirty or forty gentlemen are talking, while they wait for the day's session to begin. Talking, talking, talking—as they have been, steadily, for the past six weeks. And getting nowhere. Whether or not they are debating it aloud, the thing that is in every man's mind at the moment is, Who is to be chosen as the General? General of what? Of a national army? There *isn't* any national army. Of these militiamen camped around Boston? They haven't, as yet, been legitimately adopted by the nation. Because there *isn't* any nation. And the gentlemen in the upper room go on talking. . . .

It is a warm morning, mid-June in Philadelphia. One of them, a shortish, full-bodied man, suddenly swallows a sort of snort of impatience, turns, catches the eye of his friend Sam Adams, and nods at the door. The two Adamases get up and tiptoe out, down the stairs, and out into the yard.

"Whoof!" says John Adams, exploding.

"What's on your mind, John?" says Sam, wonderingly.

They walk up and down in the yard, for a breath of fresh air. John mops the perspiration from his forehead; and the probability is that he fishes out a piece of tobacco and clamps his jaws down on it,

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hard, to quiet his nerves, before he answers. Then he bursts out:

"See here! Hancock wants to be General, doesn't he?"

"Of course—we all know that."

"And some of the Congress want Washington, don't they?"

"Yes. Go on."

"But not even the Virginians themselves are unitedly for Washington, *are* they? I've been talking to them, individually, you know. I found more than one very cool on the subject of Washington, very cool. Pendleton, in particular. Oh, he was *very* clear and full against it!"

"All right. What then?"

"And John Hancock has done infinitely more for his country's cause, hasn't he? His exertions, his sacrifices, his general merits, are incomparably greater than those of Colonel Washington!"

"I'll be the last man to deny *that*, John."

"Well, then? Ought not Hancock to be made General?"

"I think so."

"You think so! But what do you do? Do you nominate him? No! Does Tom Cushing? No, *he*

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hangs back! Does Bob Paine? No, *he* doesn't come forward! You know very well, Sam, I've taken great pains to get the four of us to agree on some plan, so that we may be unanimous; you know very well that you won't pledge yourselves to *anything*; and I'm sick and tired of it! I've made up my mind to *do* something! *I'm* determined to take a step that will *compel* you, and Paine, and Cushing, and all the rest of this nibbling, quibbling Congress declare yourselves for or against *something*!"

"Yes? So you're going to nominate your man Hancock?"

"I'm going to nominate—George Washington!"

And Sam Adams stares at John Adams, and says never a word. . . .

Well might he be speechless. Had John Adams gone suddenly out of his senses? Did he mean to ruin himself, not only with John Hancock, the most powerful man in New England, but with all of New England as well? Was he resolved deliberately to insult Hancock, the rich man and dear friend, whose legal business made up so much of John Adams's income?

Was he, seriously, going to propose that the people of New England, a proud tribe, would submit to a proposal to place their army, their general, and

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all their officers, under the command of a total stranger?

Was he deliberately, with the New England army facing the British at Boston, and in hourly expectation of another battle more bloody and desperate than the first, planning to change the command of that army, a thing never known in the military history of the world? Did he actually mean to supersede a general—Artemas Ward—a commander-in-chief, universally esteemed, beloved, and confided in by his army and their country, by appointing another, an entire stranger, whom they had never seen, whose name they had scarcely heard? Has this man Adams lost his mind?

But he stands there, a short, erect figure, there in the State House yard, and repeats very coolly, and with unshakeable resolution:

"I am determined, *this morning*, to make a direct motion that Congress should adopt the army before Boston, and appoint Colonel Washington commander of it."

He walks back into the building, with Sam Adams following him in awe.

"Accordingly, when Congress had assembled," John Adams goes on calmly with the narrative, "I

rose in my place, and, in as short a speech as the subject would admit, represented the state of the Colonies, the uncertainty in the minds of the people, their great expectation and anxiety, the distresses of the army, the dangers of its dissolution, the difficulty of collecting another, and the probability that the British army would take advantage of our delays, march out of Boston, and spread desolation as far as they could go. I—”

Let us interrupt the speech for an instant. There is a tall man sitting in the assembly, a man of giant frame, immaculately dressed, who has tiptoed in after the rest have taken their places, and, sitting modestly near the door, has been listening intently to every word that John Adams is speaking. And Adams goes on:

“I concluded with a motion, in form, that the Congress would adopt the army at Cambridge, and appoint a General; that though this was not the proper time to nominate a General, yet, as I had reason to believe this was a point of the greatest difficulty, I had no hesitation to declare that I had but one gentleman in my mind for that important command, and that was a gentleman from Virginia who was amongst us and very well known to all of us, a gentleman whose skill and experience as an officer,

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whose independent fortune, great talents, and excellent universal character would command the approbation of all America, and unite the cordial exertions of all the Colonies better than any other person in the whole Thirteen. . . .”

The red has been slowly creeping up the bronzed cheekbones of the tall man who listens. “Mr. Washington, who happened to sit near the door, as soon as he heard me allude to him, from his usual modesty, darted into the library-room. . . . Mr. Hancock—who, being the president of the Congress, sat facing me, thus giving me an opportunity to observe his countenance—heard me with visible pleasure while I was speaking on the state of the Colonies, the army at Cambridge, and the enemy; but when I came to describe Washington for the commander, I never remarked a more sudden and striking change of countenance. Mortification and resentment were expressed as forcibly as his face could exhibit them. . . .

“Mr. Samuel Adams seconded the motion . . . and the subject came under debate. Several gentlemen declared themselves against the appointment of Mr. Washington; not on account of any personal objection against him, but because the army were all from New England, had a General of their own, Ward, appeared to be satisfied with him, and had

proved themselves able to imprison the British army in Boston, which was all they (the speakers?) expected or desired at that time. Mr. Pendleton, of Virginia, and Mr. Sherman, of Connecticut, were very explicit in declaring this opinion; Mr. Cushing and several others more faintly expressed their opposition, and their fears of discontents in the army and in New England. Mr. Paine expressed a great opinion of General Ward and a strong friendship for him having been his classmate at college, or at least his contemporary; but gave no opinion upon the question. The subject was postponed to a future day. . . .”

But the trick had been turned, the victory won. This man Adams had got what he wanted—*action!* He had cut the knot that was baffling everybody else, the maddening deadlock was broken, he had broken down the obstruction in the stream and the whole mighty torrent of the nation was unloosed and sweeping on!

He, this man Adams, had brought about “the most material event in the history of America.”

“The Congress stands adjourned for the day,” says John Hancock, between tight lips. The rap of his gavel on the desk before him echoes down through the ages. His face is a thunder-cloud. He will have

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to sleep on this bitter disappointment tonight, until he can get himself sufficiently in hand by tomorrow to write to Elbridge Gerry, in Massachusetts, that "Washington is a fine man." But he never quite forgives this man Adams. He shows a coldness toward him from that day on.

But as the members pour out of the State House, at the end of that session, John Adams, not allowing a single moment to slip by, strikes while the iron is hot. He buttonholes the members before they have time even to go home, and are still in the State House yard. "Pains were taken out of doors to obtain a unanimity," he says, briefly. "The voices were so generally in favor of Washington"—and we may be sure that this man Adams is hurrying from man to man, on the spot, until he has this support lined up—"that the dissentient members were persuaded to withdraw their opposition." There then remains the business of finding a suitable man to make the formal motion, so soon as the sessions resume, the next day. A redheaded chap, Thomas Johnson,¹ hailing from Maryland, a colony geographically midway between Massachusetts and Virginia, is picked to make the nominating speech. There is no reason for doubt-

¹ A few months after this, in February, 1777, the sentry outside General Washington's headquarters stuck his head indoors and remarked: "There's a

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ing that John Adams is responsible for this piece of finesse, as well. In one letter he affects haziness on this point— "Mr. Washington was nominated, by Mr. Thomas Johnson, of Maryland, *I believe*." Believe, indeed! He knows perfectly well who was picked to make the formal speech, and why!

Washington is unanimously elected.

The man who made Washington is John Adams.

And *why* did he create Washington? Not because he preferred him to John Hancock for the post; not because he regarded him as a better soldier than Charles Lee; not for any reason that can be named, except one: because John Adams wanted *immediate action*, by which the British could be driven out of America and America made a nation. These were his desires, his overpowering, implacable desires; and, when John Adams was in the grip of his desires, he was accustomed to get what he wanted. . . .

And why did he choose Washington, as the man through which these Wishes were to be gratified? Again, there is but one reason. Do you remember that afternoon of August 29, 1774, just nine and a half months before, when John Adams was met on

little redheaded man outside, Sir, who says his name is Tom Johnson and be damned to you and that he's bound to come in." He was admitted.—The Life of Thomas Johnson, by Edward S. Delaplaine.

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the outskirts of the city of Philadelphia by some gentlemen who had ridden out to meet the Massachusetts men and warn them to be on their guard against certain things? *You* may have forgotten it, but John Adams had not, on June 15, 1775, when he rose in his seat and gave birth to George Washington.

For the conversation that took place that day, there in the private room of a tavern in Frankfort, has given, asserts John Adams, "a color, complexion, and character, to the whole policy of the United States from that day to this. Without it, Mr. Washington would never have commanded our armies; nor Mr. Jefferson have been the author of the Declaration of Independence; nor Mr. Richard Henry Lee the mover of it; nor Mr. Chase the mover of foreign connections. . . . I had forgot to say," he adds with a chuckle, "nor had Mr. Johnson been the nominator of Washington for General!"

Just nine and a half months from August 29 to June 15. Not overly long a gestation. . . .

To his friend Elbridge Gerry, Adams writes, as soon as he has got his way:

"There is something charming to me in the conduct of Washington. A gentleman of one of the first fortunes upon the continent, leaving his delicious re-

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tirement, his family and friends, sacrificing his ease, and hazarding it all in the cause of his country! His views are noble and disinterested. He declared, when he accepted the mighty trust, that he would lay before us an exact account of his expenses and not accept a shilling for pay.

"The express waits."

This is the letter of June 18, 1775.

In a letter written also in June, apparently on the nineteenth, by Mr. Adams to his newly-born infant, Mr. Washington, who is about to start for the army camp at Cambridge, he concludes:

"I wish you—an agreeable journey. . . ."

A journey through the ages?

"We owe no thanks," remarks Mr. Adams, years later, "to Virginia for Washington. Virginia is indebted to Massachusetts for Washington, not Massachusetts to Virginia. Massachusetts made him a general, *against the inclinations of Virginia*. Virginia never made him more than a colonel. . . ."

And, he adds, "I was subjected to almost as bitter exprobatons for creating Washington commander-in-chief as I had been, five years before, for saving Preston and his soldiers from an unrighteous judgment and execution. . . ."

WHEN YOU NEED A GOD, CREATE HIM

“Are not these facts as new to you as any political tale that could be brought to you from Arabia, or by a special messenger from Sirius, the dog-star?

“It is sufficient for me to say that the facts are true, and I attest them with my hand.”

COURAGE

WE say, a soldier is "a man of action." We say, a naval commander is "a man of action." There is admiration in it, as though the man of "action" were peculiarly important. But with this man Adams, his words are his acts. He never took the field with a troop of horse. He never commanded a man-of-war. But what a man of action he is! His words harry and drive the enemy like a wind that tramples a field of wheat. They command multitudes of men, lift them, inspire them, rally them, drive them on to mighty emprise. His is the hand that moves not armies alone, but nations, of which armies are only a part. His sword bites through empires. "*Damn that Adams!*" prayed Sir Francis Bernard, British Governor of the colony, with fervor. "Every dip of his pen stings like a horned snake!"

So seething, quivering hot is the flame of his being, a cauldron of steel, molten with mighty fires from birth, that while we die around him, he still lives. He has a gigantic contempt for what he calls "softly"

people. "The softly people where I lodge, this man and his wife," he snorts, "are the opposites of everything great, spirited, and enterprising. . . . He has always been the same softly living thing, the thing that creepeth upon the face of the earth." And to those who counsel him to mind his own tongue, he cries in a white rage: "Of all the animals on earth that ever fell in my way, your trimmers, your double-tongued and double-minded men, your disguised folks, I detest most! The devil, I think, has a better title to these, by half, than he has to those who err openly and are barefaced villains!"

The only indestructible part of us humans is our effective acts and our effective words. All the rest vanishes, like bubbles in the sea. And since John Adams's effective words are his living acts, his story is the story of his words, and not of what he ate for dinner last Tuesday. Nor is it necessary to record the flashes which illuminate his powers of hatred, as, for example, his hot characterization of a man with whom he radically disagreed, as being "a mongrel, between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf." His invective is stinging, but the part of him that lives is something much greater. It is elemental, like fire, water, or light—the embodiment of the force called Me.

He begins by thinking of the continental congress of 1774 as an assembly of the best minds ever brought together anywhere, in all the world's history; but he soon grows impatient of their dilatoriness and exclaims that among them all there does not seem to be one member, except Patrick Henry, who has the slightest comprehension of the precipice, or rather, the pinnacle, upon which each member of that queer assembly is standing, or has candor and courage enough to acknowledge it. One third of them, he declares, are hide-bound adherents to the old order, one-third radicals, and the rest "mongrels." John Adams's habit of speaking his mind, regardless of consequences, according to one historian was "his incorrigible and besetting weakness. He had his full share of severe lessons, but neither years nor mortifications could ever teach him to curb his hasty, ungovernable tongue. That little member was too much for him to the end, great, wise, and strong-willed as he was." The historian is blandly unconscious of contradicting himself in this pronouncement. He is unconscious that the strong will, instead of curbing the speech, caused it. . . . It should be said, rather, that this habit of frankness is Adams's incorrigible and besetting strength. The assertion that the habit was too much for Adams "to the end" rests

upon the false assumption that there *is* an "end." There has been no end in Mr. Adams's life. There cannot be. What business has his historian with a mere handful of years long past? He lives, *because* he never curbed his hasty, ungovernable tongue. The softly people, who have never dared, speak full truth, lie dead. Truth stings, like a hornéd snake, but never dies.

We are Americans today because of one of the slips of that hot tongue. It occurred during the second continental congress, that of 1775:

The cleverest thing that the combined intellects of the congress of 1774 could think up, as a means of prevailing upon England to abandon her harshness toward the colonies, was a measure forbidding the colonies to import any goods from England or to export any goods to England—an attempt to keep the Giants from passing to and fro across the water. John Adams went along with the crowd, against his better judgment. The sentiment in favor of the measure was too universal and strong, he saw, to be opposed by one man. It didn't work. The congress of 1775 began to appear as if it, too, was to be equally ineffective. Among all its members there were only two who were convinced, in their souls, that the only solution was *to fight*. These two were Patrick

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Henry and John Adams. They had been stirred to this conviction by the words of a forgotten American, Joseph Hawley of Massachusetts, Adams's friend.

The bully and boss of the 1775 congress was an immensely rich Philadelphian, one John Dickinson, "the farmer of Pennsylvania." Adams describes him as having been subject to hectic complaints—"he is a shadow; tall, but slender as a reed; one would think at first sight that he could not live a month; yet, upon a more attentive inspection, he looks as if the springs of life were strong enough to last many years." At their first acquaintance, Adams believed the man to be honest, sincerely patriotic; and dined repeatedly and amiably with him. This continued throughout 1774. But with the resumption of the conferences in 1775, Dickinson begins to waver. His mother and his wife have been imploring him to mind the consequences of rashly defying England. "John, you will be hanged; your wealth will be confiscated; your wife will be widowed, and your children orphans, beggars and infamous." Dickinson was swayed by their supplications; and, one by one, brought members from Pennsylvania and other colonies over to the side of caution. To them all, John Adams, unwavering in his determination, became an object of

“dread, terror and abhorrence.” The congress, which has begun early in May, goes on for a month with nothing done. Then Dickinson attempts to prevail upon it to send another humble petition to England.

Adams leaps up and opposes the plan so effectively that he turns the tide. Then he goes out doors for a moment. Dickinson darts after him. He is trembling with rage and fear; and breaks out in a passion of rebuke to Adams, roughly and haughtily. “Have you gone mad?” he demands. “What is the reason for your determination to oppose our measures of conciliation? Look you here: if you don’t instantly stop this nonsense, I and others will break off from you of New England, and carry on in our own way!” Adams stares at him. Then he says, coolly, that he is not accustomed to being threatened. The two men never again speak to each other, from that moment.

Nearly two months go by; and still no man has dared to bring the idea of a sharp break with England out into the open. Adams’s tongue now slips into its luckiest piece of unruliness. Still smarting with Dickinson’s rudeness, still angry because Dickinson has contrived to keep the congress creeping along upon softly measures, Adams blurts out a letter to his friend Warren in Boston. In it he calls

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Dickinson "a certain great fortune and piddling genius." He asserts that this rich piddler "has given a silly cast to our whole doings." He implores the colonies to take the whole continent into their own hands, raise an army of millions, form a navy, seize all tories, rise in their strength as one—in short, make war first, negotiate afterwards.

And the messenger bearing this letter is captured and the letter published!

Adams's opinions had been known in Congress; he had made no secret of them; but now the whole continent turned its attention to the idea of independence. In Philadelphia, the weight of Dickinson's rage and that of his influential friends was enough to make Adams avoided, "like a man infected with the leprosy." He walked the streets in solitude, "an object of almost universal scorn and detestation." He was made to suffer. But that was in Philadelphia alone. Every post brought in, from all parts of the colonies, letters imploring the members of the Congress to stand firm, with Adams, for independence. His incorrigible tongue has stung a nation alive.

"In the autumn of 1774, I had, with Mr. Patrick Henry, some familiar conversation. I had but just received a short and hasty letter, written to me by Major Joseph Hawley, of Northampton, containing

a few 'broken hints,' as he called them, of what he thought was proper to be done, and concluding with these words, '*after all, we must fight.*' This letter I read to Mr. Henry, who listened with great attention; and as soon as I had pronounced the words, 'after all, we must fight,' he raised his head, and with an energy and vehemence that I can never forget, broke out with: 'BY GOD, I AM OF THAT MAN'S MIND!' . . . I considered this as a sacred oath, upon a very great occasion."

His tongue "too much" for him? To the messenger from whom his letters, including the one exco-riating Dickinson's delays, were seized, he writes, in 1787: "Those letters are the first monument extant of the immortally glorious project of Independence. Instead of blushing at them, I glory in them!"

It is in this year that he proves, in the series of papers signed "Novanglus," and proves it, if you please, by the law of England, that America is outside the jurisdiction of the law of England! Being a person consumed with his burning Wish, he can prove anything he desires to prove. Two million other persons have the same natural wish—the wish to continue unmolested in their acquisition of property—and his impressive legal arguments find an audi-

ence like tinder. "If there is no precedent, it is high time that a precedent be made."

It has now been ten years since he published that amazing document of his, "A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law," a study which he began as a young man, just at the moment that another young man took his seat on the throne of England. He has been actuated by its principles (his) for ten years; and now a million others are being actuated by the same principles. As they govern America today, and will continue to govern it, we of today ought to be aware of them:

"Radicals must understand that *the love of power*, though it has so often been the cause of slavery imposed upon the weak-willed, has, wherever freedom has at all existed, been the cause of freedom. The love of power, for themselves, has always stimulated the "common" people to aspire to escape from the power of the few; to endeavor to confine the power of the great within the limits of equity and reason. The poor people, it is true, have always been much less successful in this than the great. They have seldom found either leisure or opportunity to form union and exert their strength; ignorant as they are, they have seldom been able to frame and support a regular opposition. This, however, has been known

by the powerful, in all ages, to be what the poor would do if they were given the opportunity; and they have accordingly endeavored strenuously (and in most cases successfully) to keep from the populace the knowledge of their rights and wrongs. Sometimes they have been beaten into submission. Sometimes they have been permitted sufficient comforts to distract their attention from what they might really have. Sometimes they have been deceived, by careful manipulation of their schools, their political leaders, and their press. They have been stripped, whenever possible and by whatever method, of the power to assert their *rights* or redress their wrongs. I say RIGHTS, for such they have, undoubtedly, antecedent to all earthly government; *rights*, that cannot be repealed or restrained by earthly laws; *rights*, derived from the great Legislator of the universe.

"The canon law, the invention of the Christian church in the Middle Ages, assured to the church power over the people by reducing their minds to a state of sordid ignorance and staring timidity, and by infusing into them a religious horror of letters and knowledge. The feudal law of the Middle Ages was originally a code of laws for barbarous tribes in armed encampment against invasions. By it, the king

was invested with the sovereign proprietorship of *all the land* within the territory of the tribe. To his chief lieutenants he permitted occupancy of the land so owned by him; the common people were held together in herds in a state of servile dependence on their lords, bound, even by the tenure of their lands, which they could not own, to follow them; and between the canon and the feudal law was formed a confederacy and together they held the people away from Liberty, from property, from knowledge.

"The settlers of America had an utter contempt for all that dark ribaldry of 'hereditary, indefeasible right,' and the 'divine, miraculous' origin of government, from which the canon law had deduced *the most mischievous of all doctrines, that of passive obedience and non-resistance*. The feudal law denied to the people any right to life or property or freedom greater than that enjoyed by the beasts of the field. To have held their lands in common, or for every man to have been the sovereign lord and proprietor of the ground he occupied, would have constituted a government too nearly like a commonwealth. . . .

"The true source of our sufferings is our timidity.

"We are afraid to think. We feel a reluctance to examine into the grounds of our privileges, and the

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extent to which we have an indisputable right to demand them, against all the power and authority on earth. . . .

“The cause of this timidity is perhaps hereditary. . . . Or we may possibly account for it by the quiet temper for which Americans have always been remarkable, no country having been less disposed to discontent than this; or by a sense they have that it is their duty to acquiesce under the administration of government, even when it is in many smaller matters grievous to them. . . . But whatever the cause, the fact is certain, we have been excessively cautious of giving offence to our government by complaining of grievances. Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write. . . .”

Since this man Adams has proceeded thus far in this provocative address, dangerously radical in its implications, he may be permitted to pause here. But no! He has something more to say, at this same moment, to the newspapers of America. It is short, and someone may wish to hang it over his desk:

MESSIEURS PRINTERS

LIBERTY cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people. . . . They have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge: the character and conduct of their rulers. Rulers are no more than attorneys, agents, and trustees, for the people; and if the cause, the interest, the trust, is insidiously betrayed, or wantonly trifled away, the people have a right to revoke the authority that they themselves have deputed, and to constitute abler and better agents, attorneys, and trustees. And the preservation of the means of knowledge among the lowest ranks is of more importance to the public than all the property of all the rich men in the country. It is even of more consequence to the rich themselves, and to their posterity. . . . None of the means of such information are more sacred than the Press.

It should be easy and cheap *and safe* for any person to communicate his thoughts to the public. And you, Messieurs Printers, whatever the tyrants of the earth may say of your paper, will do important service to your country by your readiness and freedom in publishing the observations upon our government by

those who seek a knowledge of its operations. The stale, impudent insinuations of "slander" and "sedition" with which the gormandizers of power will always endeavor to discredit your paper, are so much the more to your honor; for the jaws of power are always open to devour, and her arm is always stretched out to destroy, if possible, the freedom of thinking, speaking, and writing. And if the public interest, liberty, and happiness have been in danger from the ambition or avarice of any great man, whatever may be his politeness, address, learning, ingenuity, and, in other respects, integrity and humanity, you will have done yourselves honor and your country a service by publishing and pointing out that avarice and ambition. These vices are so much the more dangerous and pernicious for the virtues with which they may be accompanied in the same character, and with so much the more watchful jealousy to be guarded against.

BE NOT INTIMIDATED, therefore, by any terrors, from publishing with the utmost freedom, whatever can be warranted by the laws of your country; nor suffer yourselves to be wheedled out of your liberty by any pretences of politeness, delicacy, or decency. These, as they are often used, are but three different names for hypocrisy, chicanery, and cowardice.

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I hope in God the time is near at hand when all men will be fully convinced of your understanding, integrity, and courage!

I must and will repeat it, such a publication deserves the patronage of every friend to his country. And whether the defamers of it are arrayed in robes of scarlet or sable; whether they lurk and skulk in a business office; whether they assume the venerable character of a churchman, the sly one of a paid propagandist, or the dirty, infamous, abandoned one of a paid informer, they are all the creatures and tools of the lust of domination.

The true source of our sufferings has been our timidity.

[. . .]

Does not any American, reading those words, know that this man Adams must never die?

THE BAFFLING SEA

THIS man Adams placed in the hand of Thomas Jefferson the pen with which to draft the Declaration of Independence. This man Adams founded the American Navy. Either of these two achievements in itself would be sufficient to make the fame of another man; but in the case of Adams they are merely things done in passing, not to be ranked with his chief business, which is the business of eternal life.

On the fifth day of May, 1776—two months before the passage of the Declaration of Independence—this man Adams drafted a motion whose preamble reads, "Whereas the present state of America, and the cruel efforts of our enemies, render the most perfect and cordial *union of the Colonies* and the utmost exertions of their strength necessary for the preservation and establishment of their liberties"; and whose enacting clause calls upon the colonies (for the first time in history) to surrender to a central, federal

authority—the Congress—power to act for them all.

Five days later the Congress adopted the motion, without the preamble, and appointed a committee of three, headed by Adams, to draft a new preamble. It was adopted in its final form, drafted by Adams, on May 15. It was openly called “a machine to fabricate independence,” and on all sides regarded as the *first* declaration of independence by a new nation.

But, a day or two later, a new committee was formed, with five members, for the purpose of drafting an even more comprehensive declaration of independence. After several days’ discussion of the matters to be included in the document, two of the committee members, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, were directed by the others to draw up the paper. Jefferson was just thirty-three years old; eight years younger than Adams. For two whole sessions in Congress he had sat silent, without uttering three sentences together, while Adams, by his constant debating, had become a recognized leader in the assembly. Two reasons prompted the inclusion of the comparatively unknown Jefferson on the committee—one, that the other delegates from Virginia, a colony entitled to a place on the committee, felt obliged to choose between him and Richard Henry Lee, who was not so popular with them; the second, the repu-

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tation he had made for himself in Virginia by his document on the rights of the colonists.

Adams and Jefferson met to discuss the task before them; and immediately Jefferson, looking up to the older and more experienced man, requested Adams to draft the declaration.

Adams does not hesitate for an instant. He makes in this crisis—for a crisis it undoubtedly is—the decision which proves his greatness. He flatly refuses to draw up the paper, insisting that Jefferson shall do it. And why? This is the dialogue:

Jefferson: "You will draw up the declaration of course."

Adams: "I will not."

"But you *should* do it."

"Oh, no!"

"Why will you not? You ought to do it."

"I will not."

"Why?"

"Reasons enough."

"What can be your reasons?"

"Reason first—you are a southern man and I a northern one; we must unite the southern colonies in this business; you are a Virginian, and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of this business. Reason second—I am obnoxious, suspected and unpopular;

if the draft is presented as being mine, it will undergo much more criticism and opposition than if it is yours. Reason third—you can write ten times better than I can.”

“Very well, then,” says Jefferson, “if you are so determined that I must, I must.”

Jefferson writes the declaration, and Adams is delighted with it. Naturally—since it contains the very principles which he has been expounding, day after day, for two years. . . .

The proceedings of the congress are secret, but in this month he writes to one friend, “Objects of the most stupendous magnitude, and measures in which the lives and liberties of millions yet unborn are intimately interested, are now before us. We are in the very midst of a revolution, the most complete, unexpected, and remarkable, of any in the history of nations.” To another he speaks of “this incessant round of thinking and speaking, upon the greatest subjects that ever employed the mind of man.” To another: “We are drudging on as usual; sometimes it is seven o’clock before we adjourn. We have had greater things in contemplation than ever: the greatest of all which we ever shall have. Be silent and patient, and time will bring forth, after the usual groans, throes, and pains upon such occasions, a fine child, a

fine, vigorous, healthy boy, I presume. God bless him and make him a great, wise, virtuous, pious, rich, and powerful man!" To another, on July the first: "This morning is assigned for the greatest debate of all. A declaration, that these colonies are free and independent States, has been reported by a committee, and this day or tomorrow is to determine its fate. May Heaven prosper the new-born republic, and make it more glorious than any former republics have been!"

And on the third of July, in a letter to his wife: "Yesterday, the greatest question was decided which was ever debated in America, and a greater, perhaps, never was nor will be decided among men. . . . The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore. . . . You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure, that it will cost us to maintain this declaration, and sup-

port and defend these states. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth all the means, and that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction, even though we shall rue it, which I trust in God we shall not."

As he had fathered the selection of Washington, so had he fathered the Declaration of Independence. He is very tired, but he cannot yet go home. . . .

§

The salt sea, vast, mysterious, dreadful, a law unto itself, came to the doors of the house in which John Adams was a child. The child saw it, from his earliest consciousness. He played, swam, fished, explored the edges of its quiet marshy inlets; but something checked him from speaking often of its outward expanse, stretching away into infinity. Perhaps it awed him. He is silent before it. Only once does he speak of it, in the days before it calls to him to cross it. Then, a man of thirty-five, he is spending an hour on a hill near his own home; and of the view from that hill-top he says: "Still, calm, and serene; cool, tranquil, and peaceful; you see Mount Wollaston, the first seat of our ancestors, and, beyond that, Stony Field Hill, covered over with corn and fruits, the place where I shall live; an orchard over there, and,

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beyond that, the large marsh called the Broad Meadows; eastward, a fine plain, covered with corn, and, beyond that, the whole harbor and all the islands; and with a prospect-glass you may see every ship, sloop, schooner, and brigantine, that comes in or goes out." But he once spoke of that sea as having made men delirious—of men who rush headlong into it, out of simple or frenzied fear of it. . . .

His interest in the law of the sea is another matter. He has no sooner begun his practice of the law, a boy of twenty-three, than he borrows from a neighbor lawyer "a treatise of naval trade and commerce" and notes in his diary: "Rose with the sun. I am now set down to the laws relating to naval trade and commerce. Let me inquire of the next master of a ship that I see, what is a bill of lading; what the log-book; what invoices they keep; what accounts they keep of goods received on board and of goods delivered out; what in other ports? etc." He has begun to sense the power of the blind Giants, the grain, the tobacco, the wares, that stride to and fro, too powerful ever to be checked, across that watery floor.

In October, 1775, news came to the members of the continental congress in session in Philadelphia that two British vessels were on their way from England to Canada, laden with arms and powder to be used

against the colonists. For twenty years John Adams has been engrossed in the study of naval and maritime affairs. Riding the circuit of the courts, he had repeatedly visited a score of seacoast towns in New England; he had talked much with the men engaged in the fisheries of cod and in whaling. He knew the value of these fisheries, and he knew, intimately, the activity, enterprise, perseverance, and intrepidity of American seamen. He was enthusiastically confident that "if they were once let loose upon the ocean," they would contribute greatly to the need of the colonists for uninterrupted trade and commerce and "to the distress of the enemy." In this moment was born in the mind of John Adams the idea of an American navy.

In a committee appointed October 5, of which he was one, and in a larger committee named a few days later, naval affairs were discussed for the seven weeks ensuing. They met daily, at 6 o'clock in the evening, after their day's work in the Congress, and toiled on for hours more. But Adams says that to him the pleasantest part of his labors in the congresses that continued for four years, from 1774 to 1778, was in the sessions of the naval committee. For this, he thanks chiefly one of its members—Governor Hop-

kins of Rhode Island, a sprightly old gentleman, more than seventy years of age. "He kept us all alive. Upon business, his experience and judgment were very useful. But when the business of the evening was over, he kept us in conversation till 11, and sometimes 12 o'clock. His custom was to drink nothing all day, nor till 8 o'clock in the evening, and then his beverage was Jamaica rum and water. It gave him wit, humor, anecdotes, science and learning. The flow of his soul made all his reading seem our own, and seemed to bring to recollection, in all of us, all that we had ever read. I could neither eat nor drink in those days. The other gentlemen were very temperate. Hopkins never drank to excess, but all he drank was immediately not only converted into wit, sense, knowledge, and good humor, but inspired us with similar qualities."

On November 25, 1775, after weeks of these pleasant evenings, Congress adopted the committee's resolution to authorize the inhabitants of all the colonies to seize any and all British vessels of war and British vessels transporting troops or military or naval stores. It was, in effect, a declaration of war anticipating the Declaration of Independence by more than seven months, and, in effect, although the

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United States did not come into formal being till nearly fourteen years thereafter, it was the origin of the American Navy.

"I have been particular in transcribing the proceedings of this day, November 25, 1775," says Adams, "because they contain the true origin and foundation of the American navy. . . . I had at least as great a share in producing them as any man living or dead. . . ."

The naval committee promptly purchased and fitted five vessels. All were in commission before the end of the year 1775. One was the ship *Alfred*, of 24 guns, named by the committee "in honor of the founder of the greatest navy that ever existed." Is it a rule of the Navy Department that the largest superdreadnaught of the fleet today shall always be named the *John Adams*? The second, also a ship of 24 guns, was named the *Columbus*, "after the greatest discoverer of this quarter of the globe." The third, a brig of 14 guns, the *Cabot*, "for the discoverer of this northern part of the continent." The fourth, also a brig of 14 guns, the *Andrew Doria*, "in memory of the great Genoese admiral." The fifth, the sloop *Providence*, of 14 guns, "for the town where she was purchased, the residence of Governor Hopkins, and

of his brother Esek, whom we appointed first captain."

Three other vessels, the sloop *Hornet* and the schooners *Wasp* and *Fly*, were also commissioned before the close of that year. The schooners *Lynch* and *Franklin*, which had been sent from Marblehead October 21, 1775, *before* the passage of the resolution, to intercept the British vessels on their way to Canada, were commissioned into the infant navy in the following year.

"I think we shall soon attend to maritime affairs and naval preparations," says Adams, in a confidential letter written November 5, 1775. "No great things are to be expected at first, but out of a little a great deal may grow. . . . It is very odd that I, who have spent my days in researches and employments so very different, and who have never thought much of old ocean, or the dominion of it, should be necessitated to make such inquiries; but it is my fate and my duty, and therefore I must attempt it. . . . I am to inquire what number of seamen may be found in our province, who would probably enlist in the service, either as marines or on board of armed vessels, in the pay of *the continent* or in the pay of the province, or on board of privateers, fitted out by

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private adventurers. . . . I must also entreat you to let me know the names, places of abode, and characters of such persons belonging to any of the seaport towns in our province, as are qualified for officers and commanders of armed vessels. . . . I want to be further instructed what ships, brigantines, schooners, &c., are to be found in any port of the province, to be sold or hired out, which will be suitable for armed vessels; what their tonnage, the depth of water they draw, their breadth, their decks, &c., and to whom they belong, and what is their age. Further, what places in our province are most secure and best accommodated for building new vessels of force, in case a measure of that kind should be thought of. . . .”

Before the war was over, thanks to this man Adams, nearly one hundred vessels had been commissioned.

The first naval committee, that appointed on October 5, supplied the authority under which Captain John Manly, a Massachusetts seaman, hoisted the American flag on a vessel of his own before the month was out, and immediately captured a British transport in those waters, bringing from on board it a piece of heavy artillery which was planted by General Washington's troops on the heights of Dorchester and did its part in causing the British evacua-



Photo by Ewing Galloway, N. Y.

U. S. NAVY DESTROYERS IN SEA ACTION

THE proceedings of November 25, 1775," says John Adams, "contain the true origin and foundation of the American navy. I had at least as great a share in producing them as any man living or dead." The Navy Department was first organized in Mr. Adams's Presidency, Washington's two terms passing without any such Department, and Adams appointed the first Secretary of the Navy. An American navy powerful enough to assure the absolute freedom of the seas to all nations was his life-long dream; and for fifty years he strove incessantly to build up the maritime power of America, doing more for this cause than any other man "living or dead." He is today in command of these and all other vessels in the American navy. . . .

tion of Boston. Whatever the shape, size, color, or design of the flag thus hoisted, by Manly, it was in truth the first emblem of a *national* navy ever displayed; and John Adams, John Langdon, and Silas Deane, the members of that first naval committee, may truly say that it was *their* hands that hoisted it there. On this ground, Adams denies that "the first American flag" was hoisted by John Paul Jones over his ship, at Philadelphia. On the same ground, he denies the claim that the first British flag was struck to Captain Barry. "I assert that the first American flag was hoisted by John Manly, and the first British flag struck to him," in 1775. Such are beginnings.

The navy of the revolution shrank with the conclusion of the war to a mere nucleus. Washington's entire eight years as President passed without the formation of a Navy Department. But immediately after John Adams was elected Washington's successor, he created the navy anew. In May, 1798, the Navy Department was born. Mr. Adams appointed the first Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddert. If any one may be said to be the father of the American navy, it is indeed this man Adams. His devotion to it was so great that it ultimately was the cause of his failure to be twice elected President. His whole difference of opinion with Alexander Hamilton and

with those members of his own Cabinet who sided with Hamilton—a bitter quarrel which brought down upon him enmities too shrewd to be defeated—may be traced back to his hot defence of a navy, in a letter addressed to his Secretary of War. All his life long, he strove for a navy; and his reward was humiliation. It is not singular that the nation at large should not know that he is the true father of its naval strength; but what honor does the Navy Department pay him, who should be honored above all others?

He is equally anxious to build up a merchant marine. "Britain has ventured to begin commercial hostilities," he cries, warningly. "I call them hostilities, because their direct object is not so much the increase of their own wealth, ships, or sailors, as the diminution of ours. A jealousy of our naval power is the true motive, the real passion, which actuates them; they consider the United States as their rival, and the most dangerous rival they have in the world." This, of course, is in 1785.

And he enunciates the dream of justice in all maritime commerce:

"If the principle of *free ships, free goods*, were once really established and honestly observed, it would put an end forever to all maritime war, and render all military navies useless. . . ."

His mind thinks of this, however, as a dream only. "However desirable this may be to humanity," he at once adds, "how much soever philosophy may approve it, and Christianity desire it, I am now clearly convinced *it will never take place*. The dominant power on the ocean will forever trample on it. . . ."

He wonders, today, who the dominant power may be. . . .

He sits at all conferences for the limitation of naval armaments.

§

Yet why, in the last analysis, does he dread the sea? What is there about that vast unfenced, indivisible, expanse of restless water than troubles him? He has no terror of the land; the land is something easily understandable, easily to be fenced, easily to be divided into little plots and acreages, each with its stone wall, that men may call their Real Property. But who shall divide the sea? Who shall write *laws* on the face of the moving waters? The sea is no man's property, the property of *all* men. . . .

But this man Adams rises, once, to the majesty of the sea. Once! But upon the walls of the chamber of what First Lord of the Admiralty, what Secretary of the Navy, what dreamer of equality for men, what

owner of land, or what landless poor man, is hung this immortal cry:

"Neither nature nor art has partitioned the sea into empires, kingdoms, republics, or states. There are no dukedoms, earldoms, baronies, or knight's fees, no freeholds, pleasure grounds, ornamented or un-ornamented farms, gardens, parks, groves, or forests there, appropriated to nations or individuals, *as there are upon land*. Let Mahomet, or the Pope, or Great Britain, say what they will, mankind will act the part of slaves and cowards if they suffer any nation to usurp dominion over the ocean or any portion of it. Neither the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the four seas, or the North Sea, are the peculiar property of any nation. The ocean and its treasures are the common property of all men. . . .

"Upon this deep and strong foundation do I build, and with this cogent and irresistible argument do I fortify our rights and liberties. . . . namely, the gift and grant of God Almighty in his creation of man, and his *land* and water; and, with resignation only to the eternal counsels of his Providence, they never will and never shall be surrendered to any human authority or any thing but divine power. . . ."

To this strange end has his remorseless logic led him.

There are, he says, men who so fear the sea that they rush headlong into it.

Strange indeed was the fascination that measureless domain wrought upon him. Once, in his absence, his wife purchased lands in the interior, suggesting that they remove there. This was his answer:

"God willing, I will not go. I must be within the scent of the sea. . . ."

THE BIGGEST-BUSINESS MAN

A YOUNGISH man—not quite thirty-four. Somewhat short in height, somewhat plump of body. In a quince-shaped face, twinkling keen eyes. This young man is jogging along by himself on a country road leading north out of Boston. The afternoon is the last one in June. It is hot. The young man's pleasant face is dewed with perspiration. He mops it. He fishes from his pocket a piece of tobacco. He bites off a quid. Stowing it in his cheek, he smiles contentedly. Trotting on along the dusty highway, the green fields and leafy woods of June at his left, the blue Atlantic (unseen) at his right, he is brought by his little mare by a half-hour after sunset to a roadside tavern a few miles from Newburyport. He alights, engages lodging, and turns his mare out to pasture for the night. Next day:

“July 1. Sunday. Arose early; a cloudy morning. Took a walk to the pasture, to see how my horse fared. My little mare had provided for herself, by leaping out of a bare pasture into a neighboring lot

of mowing-ground, and had filled herself with grass and water. These are important materials for history, no doubt! My biographer will scarcely introduce my little mare and her adventures in quest of food and water."

The quest of food and water, and the leaping of stone walls! These are the *whole* materials of history!

Whither bound is this young man, who makes that entry in his diary? To some New English village, distant only a few miles from his own pastures? Is he an itinerant peddler, going from door to door? If so, what is he selling? What force stirs in him, thus to prompt him to set down his knowledge that he will inevitably have biographers? Is his journey to end "half an hour after sunset," as his journal records that day?

His journey is never to end. . . . He is to be the perpetual counselor of all those in search of food and water. . . . A strange young peddler, this; taking from his saddle-bags not pins and calicoes but all the hungers of men.

The makers of dictionaries have scarcely done justice, as yet, to the force of the verb "to sell" in the American idiom. When they come to define "sale," they seem to envision nothing more than a transaction across a wooden counter, three feet wide.

"To sell," in the American language, is much more than this. It is dynamic. It connotes invisible reservoirs of gigantic power, of sleeping forces capable of troubling continents and seas. It is something before which to tremble.

There is, at the east front of the post-office building in Philadelphia, a piece of statuary. It represents the American postman, the letter-carrier. There he stands. His service has been faithful, and unrewarded, and it is fitting that he should have this memorial. But a nobler statue than this is still to be erected. It is the national statue of The Salesman.

The Salesman. . . . Some day he will stand there, at the national capitol, a figure in imperishable brass, out-topping the monument to the Soldier. . . . Perhaps his statue will have four replicas, one for each border of the continent, towering a full half-mile into the smiling skies; so that the alien visitor, from whatever quarter he may come, may behold the Spirit of the Republic from afar off and bow his head in awe and reverence.

At his sturdy knees, around which the clouds gather in vain, will still stand the Statue of Liberty, though no taller than a little girl. . . .

For what is "salesmanship" in the language of the race and the generation that has been the first to

guess its limitless power? It is no mere matter of accepting pennies in exchange for a yard of ribbon. It is the greatest of all human (or divine) achievements: the production of a state of mind. . . .

The mind that can bend Matter to its will is great. The mind that can bend Mind to its will is greatest.

One turns in gratitude and awe to gaze up at that titan figure, the Salesman, whose first name in America is *John Adams*. The triumphs of the mind are his—his, and none other's. He it is who harnesses Niagara. He it is who mines seventy million tons of iron ore and who forges fifty million tons of steel in a single year. He it is who plants and harvests a billion-dollar crop of wheat. He it is, a mightier Theocrite, who spreads the profoundest philosophy throughout the globe, the philosophy that every hunger deserves its food, its drink. Peace bulges from his traveling-bags and Plenty drips from his plethoric sample-case.

In that sample-case are not tangible things merely. In it he carries, as well, those intangible things that some call Moral Ideas and some call Hunger-Makers. Over many a counter, he has found, he must sell the intangible before the tangible. And he has found that he must "sell" these things, tangible and intangible, to himself, before he can "sell" them to others. This is

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his secret of salesmanship. *He* must believe in them, before he can make others believe in them. "I am sold on that," says the purchaser, seriously. He does not mean, by this, that he has been duped. He means that the thing presented to him for his consideration has been presented in a way that makes it utterly desirable. The instant in which he reaches this frame of mind is the precise moment of "sale." The signing of a check or of a contract, the tender of cash, is a mere subordinate detail. The true sale is the production of a state of mind. . . .

Thus armed, with this conviction in the depths of his soul that his goods are supremely desirable, the salesman goes forth to conquer. His sales-counter is not a board three feet in width. It spans the whole globe. And, already "sold" to his own wares, he cannot fail. It is time for the world to surrender.

.

Under a resolution of Congress dated November 28, 1777, this man Adams is appointed one of three Commissioners to represent the American colonies in negotiations with France. The two others are Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee, who have already been in France for some months. Adams reaches Paris April 8, 1778, and hands them their new commissions. In Paris, he and Franklin disagree, on comparatively

minor matters; and Adams succeeds in getting Congress to agree that one Commissioner, instead of three, will be sufficient. Lee is transferred to Spain, and Adams is allowed to return home, as he wishes.

The chief importance of the eleven months he has spent in Paris is that they afforded John Adams the opportunity to begin a work which it took him some four years to complete: namely, the foundations of the whole policy of the United States, from that day to this, in dealing with foreign nations.

A stupendous achievement; but only a part of the life that runs in his veins today.

In less than two months after Adams reached home, in 1779, Congress selects him, and not Franklin, to be its sole minister plenipotentiary to negotiate peace with England whenever England invites such negotiation.

Adams reaches Paris, this second time, early in February, 1780. He asserts that it was his wish to proceed immediately to Holland, there to wait until such time as the peace negotiations might begin, employing the meanwhile in building up friendly relations between Holland and the colonies; but on one pretext and another, the Count de Vergennes, French minister of foreign affairs, prevented his departure for Holland until the end of July. In the end of this

enforced stay of four months in Paris, an argument arose between de Vergennes and Adams, in which Franklin took the side of the Frenchman. Throughout it all, it must be confessed, Adams conducted himself considerably like a bull in a china-shop; but the incident is wholly without present-day significance, except in one of its phases: its part in the foundation of the true policy of America toward other nations.

That enduring good has this background:

Franklin had now been in France for more than three full years. In all that time, he had *not* established the true dignity of America.

He had, it is true, succeeded in obtaining substantial—indispensable—aid from France, in money and men. For this he was rightly regarded in America with profound gratitude. By the people of France, he was adored, not only because of his vast achievements in science, not only for his wit, his good humor, and his social graces, but also because he fell in, far too complacently, with the designs of the French for the aggrandizement of France at the expense of America.

Briefly, Adams saw, as Franklin did not, that while it suited France to aid the American colonies to some extent, because the Americans were crippling the

strength of France's ancient enemy, England, France had no desire to see America grow too powerful. France had but lately been driven from her foothold in America, and still looked with a hungry eye for a return and an augmentation of her power there. She was willing to aid the colonies to some extent; but she wished to keep them wholly dependent, for outside aid, upon herself alone; and she had no wish that any other European nation should recognize the "infant" in her care and thus weaken her influence over it. With this sort of aid, Franklin was quite content to go along; afraid to risk the anger of France by taking the broader ground that America was entitled to aid from *all* nations, equally.

John Adams is a salesman of another type. He knows his America thoroughly. He knows the limitless resources, the limitless courage, of the young giant. First and truest of America's salesmen, he himself is "sold" on America, every ounce of him. He challenges the whole world to surpass his goods. He wins. He is the first great exponent, on foreign soil, of the dignity of America; the true founder of the American policy of friendliness to all nations equally, and the contraction of entangling alliances with none.

His attempt to display this policy, in France, neglected by Franklin, results in his visit to Holland.

His stubbornness, his "unruly" tongue, has again produced exactly what he desires. . . .

He spends eleven months in Holland, eleven months of the most exacting labor ever placed on the shoulders of any man; comes back to Paris for nearly six months, on a premature statement that the English are ready to negotiate peace; while in Paris again defeats de Vergennes' attempts to dictate to America; goes back to his strenuous labors in Holland for another ten months, and leaves there, triumphant, late in October, 1782, having succeeded in prevailing upon Holland, in spite of all machinations of de Vergennes, in spite of all Franklin's weakness, to recognize the United States as an independent nation and to lend the United States five million guilders, the first of repeated loans to America in her need.

The salesman has booked his first orders. He has challenged the whole world. He has established the foreign policy of America. Throughout these two years he has steadily acted on his own initiative. And this man Adams is a living force in every American transaction of today. . . .

"The Americans are, at this day, a great people, and are not to be trifled with."

It was in 1786 that he said this; but he had been saying it, over and over, for twenty years before

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that date. He is the original man to say, "On America, I am bullish." In that faith, he moves mountains. It is what he says today. He is America's biggest-business man.

Of the recognition of the independence of the colonies by Holland he wrote: "Nòt the Declaration of American Independence, not the Massachusetts Constitution, not the alliance with France, ever gave me more satisfaction or more pleasing prospects for our country than this event. It is a pledge against *friends* and enemies. It is an eternal barrier against all dangers from French ambitions, as well as a present security against England. Perhaps every imagination does not rove into futurity as much as mine. . . ."

.

We may go back even further than all this. Beginning with the first Congress of all, that of 1774, John Adams has had in mind an object which is as dear to him as the idea of independence for the colonies. In his mind the two are halves of one whole. This object is *foreign alliances*.

As zealously as he fights for independence, he fights, from the very first, for *a definite plan* of intercourse with foreign nations. No one else, not even Franklin, does so. But Adams finds in Samuel Chase, of Maryland, an ally for his views; and in the

autumn of 1774 they concert a motion, the first of its sort, designed to authorize the despatch of ambassadors to France, under definite instructions. Chase offers the motion and Adams seconds it. They have agreed on this order because Adams has been so active in proposals that it seems wise to offer this one by the lips of another. Too many members had not yet reached the degree of courage which the Congress later attained, and the measure was lost for the time. But in debating the question, on the floor of the Congress, Mr. Adams enunciated the principle which eventually became adopted as the fixed policy of the United States toward foreign nations. Washington incorporated it in his famous Farewell Speech, *twenty-five years later*, and has thus usurped the credit for it. And, in addition to inventing it in theory, this man Adams had now actually put it into operation with his own hands, at once the sales-manager and the salesman in the field. . . .

As a corollary to this theory that "we should separate ourselves, as far as possible and as long as possible, from all European politics and wars," he proposed that America should begin by making no treaties but treaties of commerce. . . . The proposal was based upon his implicit faith in the ability of America to be self-sustaining—a faith that was

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greater in him than in any other man of the time.
... *Operator, have you got that call through yet?*
We want to speak to Mr. Adams!

.

On the heels of his happiness with Holland, comes the three months of tough wrestling which ends in the signing of the preliminary articles of peace between England and America. Statesmen of four nations, England, America, France and Spain, sit at that protracted poker session. The American team is Adams, Franklin, and John Jay. Of all the dozen or so players in that breathlessly exciting session, there is none who is so sure of his hand, so ready to play it to the limit, as John Adams. Whenever he needs a card, he calmly draws upon the reserve that he, of all men there, best knows can never be exhausted—the strength of America. Each time, he fills. . . .

There is glory enough for all three, Franklin, Jay, and Adams, in that victorious struggle, so that there is no need now to speculate as to which one of them, if any, deserves more of the glory than the other two. But when the articles in their final form are signed; when each man steps forward to dip his pen to the ink and affix his signature, there is, in the case of this man Adams, the peculiar, the perfect, consummately-ordained dramatic climax.

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Look at him, as he steps forward. Who is he? He is the man whose paper of instructions in defiance of the Stamp Act in 1765 rang through the Colony and united its inhabitants against taxation without representation; he is the man who united all the colonies behind one leader, Washington; he is the man who drove the Declaration of Independence through the Congress; he is the man who has split England's empire open, his wedge her own law-books; he, this tired, pale, insignificant little man, who has ruined his health, his business and his prospects in a forty years' fever of saying, "This is Me, this is Mine, and no power on earth shall touch Me and Mine"—stands there now, with pen poised, the *embodiment* of all that England has feared and hated for forty years. . . .

And what is it that she had so long feared and hated? Her best self! She feared her own invention, the invention of that spirit in man that stubbornly clings, against all attackers, to the possession of Property and the possession of Rights. She feared her own conscience. And this little man, with pen poised, embodies it. . . .

He signs: JOHN ADAMS.

And beside the little man's signature, England meekly affixes hers.

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On a marble slab, his son, also a President of the United States, cuts this:

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1776,
HE PLEDGED HIS
LIFE, FORTUNE, AND SACRED HONOR
TO THE
INDEPENDENCE OF HIS COUNTRY;
ON THE THIRD OF SEPTEMBER, 1783,
HE AFFIXED HIS SEAL
TO THE DEFINITIVE TREATY
WITH GREAT BRITAIN, WHICH
ACKNOWLEDGED
THAT INDEPENDENCE;
AND CONSUMMATED THE REDEMPTION
OF HIS PLEDGE

.

Nor is the Dramatist satisfied, even with this. America, for once, shows a grim sense of humor. It instructs John Adams—no one else—to proceed to England as the First Representative of America. . . .

ESSAY ON HUNGER

“**W**HEN I was about to leave Paris to go to England,” said Mr. Adams, “some curious reflections passed through my mind. I fell to pondering on the meaning of the word American.”

“Yes?”

“Well, imagine the circumstances; put yourself in my place. This was early in May, 1785.”

“Well?”

“The word ‘American’ had, so to speak, just been born. It never rightly existed before, in the sense in which it could now be used.

“Englishmen had been living in America, it is true, for nearly two hundred years and it had long been the custom to refer to such persons as ‘Americans.’ But this was merely to distinguish their place of residence, not their nationality. They were still English citizens.

“And, if the war for independence had *failed*, they still would have been, in 1783, Englishmen, not

Americans. But it didn't fail. . . . And so, here was I, about to be the very *first* American!

"I'm not bragging, don't worry. People have tried to flatter me on this subject before. The Count de Vergennes said to me that very day, 'Permit me to say it is a great thing to be the first ambassador from your country to the country you sprang from. It is a mark!'

"But I replied that I was not much concerned with the honor—it was the difficulty of the job that was weighing most on my mind at that moment, nothing else.

"I don't believe that any of you, of this generation, can really appreciate the tumult of sensations that would shake a person in such a situation. How could you? You have been a citizen of a great nation, a nation that has been independent for a hundred and fifty years, a nation that is now the most powerful of all the nations on earth. It is simply impossible for you today to conceive our situation, and our feelings. We were nothing! And we had defied the nation that was *then* the most powerful on earth, and had beaten it! Beaten it, but then what? Could we *keep on*? Can you imagine the welter of emotions we then felt?

"And here was I, picked to be the first man of all

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these new Americans, poor John Adams, delegated to walk right up into the British lion's mouth and to *live* there!

"Lord, what a ticklish job!

"Don't forget—we were marked men in England, we Adamses. Our names, John and Sam, had been written down there. They ranked us two as having been the most pestiferous trouble-makers of the whole lot. If the war had been lost, we were to have no mercy. Others might be pardoned, but not John and Sam. We were to dangle at the ends of ropes; and serve us right!

"And now here I am, ordered to go marching up to King George and to say, 'How do you do, Your Majesty? I hope you're feeling well today?'

"A pretty situation, what?

"Right at this moment, there in Paris, one of the foreign ambassadors to the court of France says to me:

"'You have been often in England?'

"'Never but once before,' says I, 'and that was in November and December, 1783.'

"'You have relations in England?'

"'None at all.'

"'None? How can that be? You are of English extraction, aren't you?'

"'Look here!' says I. I was a bit hot. 'Neither my father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, great grandfather or great grandmother, nor any other relation I know of, or care a farthing for, has been in England these one hundred and fifty years; so that you see I have not one drop of blood in my veins but what is American!'

"And I meant it! I mean it today. English extraction, forsooth! Those were my feelings then, and they are my feelings today, if you care to ask. We were stubborn, in those days, and the stubbornness got results for us. So why change overnight?

"Well, the English got no cakes from me, when I finally packed up and went over to London. They were polite enough. So was I. Civility was our motto, on both sides. I remember going to a ball at the French Ambassador's, where there were two or three hundred people, chiefly ladies. There I met the Marquis of Lansdown and the Earl of Harcourt. These two noblemen ventured to enter into conversation with me. So did Sir George Young. But there was an awkward timidity in general. These people couldn't look me in the face! There was conscious guilt and shame in their countenances when they did look at me—they felt that they had behaved ill, and they knew very well that I knew they had behaved ill.

"But these personal reminiscences are trivial. The important thing, to you of today and to me, is the meaning of the word American. What *is*, or what should be, an 'American'?

"My definition is a simple one. Incidentally, I would like this definition to apply also as a definition of myself, John Adams.

"An American is a person who insists on his rights.

"That's simple enough, isn't it? Of course, having said that, a great deal more may be said. What is 'a person'? What does it mean to 'insist'? What are 'rights'?

"You can chew over each of these words for a good while. There is substance in 'em. *I* have chewed over them all my life. . . .

"A 'person' is, anyone who loves *power*. And that means *every* living being. Even a baby! A baby loves power. Great heavens, is there anything on earth so frankly desirous of power as is a baby? Why, a baby is just nothing at all except one long continuous yell for power!

"The love for power is the most elemental attribute we humans have. It is born with us; 'more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea.' It's humanity's one great asset.

"Most people surrender it before they pass out of childhood.

"The great are those who hang on to it.

"You'll never get power unless you *insist*, and *keep on* insisting, that you must have it. From babyhood on, through life. . . .

"But at any rate, the love of power is universal, at birth. That's what Jefferson was trying to say when he wrote in the Declaration of Independence, 'all men are *created* equal.' And that's what we have to start on.

"Then he tagged on, after those words, a few more: to the effect that all men are 'endowed by their Creator' with 'certain unalienable Rights.' That's true, they are. I had said exactly the same thing, ten years before. *I* had written that all men have 'rights, derived from the great Legislator of the Universe.' I had written exactly that same adjective, 'unalienable.' As a matter of fact, there is *nothing* in the Declaration of Independence which was not contained, and even more forcibly expressed, in that paper of mine, 'A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law,' which I wrote (and published) *ten years* before the Declaration. . . .

"And there's one sentence in that *Dissertation* of

mine that's far more profound than any sentence in the Declaration. It's this:

" 'The love of power has always been the *cause* of freedom.'

"Think *that* over! Think it over!

"I mean the love of power that *everybody* is born with.

"You are born with this thing; and, if you don't let it get beaten out of you, until you are nothing but a dazed, dumb, defeated animal, you will see to it that you get the power you are entitled to. *You will win freedom.* You will get *what you are entitled to*; entitled by the mere fact that you were *born*.

"Don't let anyone tell you that your Creator permits us to be born as a joke. He does nothing as a joke. . . .

" 'The love of power has always been the *cause* of freedom,' is a profound truth; and another sentence in that same essay of mine is also profound. *It* should have been included in the Declaration of Independence, as well as the other. It is this:

" 'The people have a right to knowledge.'

"That sounds simple, I suppose; but it's a great truth. We do have a right to knowledge. Just as

truly as 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' are inalienable rights, so is *the right to know*. In fact, it is much more important than the three just quoted. Much more! If you have knowledge, then the other three will follow. If you haven't, you will lose all three. . . .

"Our great Creator, who does nothing in vain, has given us understandings and *a desire* to know.

"Well, the whole of the American republic and the whole individuality of the true American is based on these two simple sentences: 'The love of power is the cause of freedom'; 'the people have a right to knowledge.'

"George Washington wouldn't have had the mentality to write two such fundamental truths if he had lived to be nine hundred. . . . *He* wasn't a thinker, he was a soldier. And soldiers take their orders from thinkers; or will, some day. . . .

"So, then, these are the two fundamental rights you start with, for your revolution—*any* revolution. The next thing to do is to *insist* on them. . . .

"They're no good to you, unless you do insist on them. Don't forget our definition—'An American is a person who insists on his rights.' And did we insist? You know we did! As that nobleman said, whom

I mentioned a moment ago, when I asserted that I have not one drop of blood in my veins but what is American—

“‘Aye,’ says he, ‘we have seen proof enough of *that!*’

“We insisted, no fear. The whole revolution, for fifteen years before its first gun was fired, aye, and throughout its whole course, consisted of just these two things: becoming conscious of one’s rights, and insisting upon those rights. . . . I did both. *I’m* not dead! Those two things constitute a *living* American. And without them, no one is alive. . . .”

This is all of the Essay on Hunger, by John Adams. We follow it, not by anything germane to it, but by a fond chuckle over an impulse that the little man has, too strong to be resisted.

He cannot bear to wait until his appointment to visit England as the duly accredited representative of America! Indeed, at that moment, October, 1782, he may not yet know that he is to be that representative. His desire, however, is unmistakable—he simply *must* go and see for himself just what this Dragon looks like, this Dragon that he has been fighting for twenty years. . . . His health has broken down, and he needs a change of scene. Other places

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would doubtless have done just as well, but no, he needs go to England. . . .

He arrives there in London on October 26. . . . How the great city roars around this little man noticed by none, unknown to all! He goes about the streets, staring. . . . Who of us can imagine the tumult of sensations within him? . . . The King and the royal family are at Windsor; he, through the friendship of the American painter, West, is permitted to go through Buckingham Palace, staring. . . . The king's library strikes him with admiration—"every book that a king ought to have, chosen with perfect taste and judgment." He can scarcely tear himself away from the room. . . . Another friend, also an artist, Copley, procures for him a card to attend the king's speech in the House of Lords, at the opening of Parliament. . . . He stares around him. So *this* is Parliament, the House that has been attacking me for twenty years! . . . As he stands there in the lobby, unnoticed, surrounded by hundreds of great personages, suddenly the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, Sir Francis Molineux, appears in the room with his long staff and roars out, in a very loud voice, "Where is Mr. Adams?"

He steps forward. "I am Mr. Adams." Is there not a flurry among the great personages, craning their

heads to have a look at this dreadful Mr. Adams? He is shown to his seat. He sees George the Third, at last. Here he is, looking at last at the monarch whose antagonist he has been for so long. They wanted to make him an American peer, once, during the war, to buy him off. *"If I would but go to hell, for an eternal moment or so, I could be knighted."* But he is more than a peer, now. . . .

For the rest, he spends his time in sight-seeing about London. Among other places, "I visited Sir Ashton Lever's museum, where was a wonderful collection of natural and artificial curiosities from all parts and quarters of the globe. Here I saw again that collection of American birds, insects, and other rarities, which I had so often seen before at Norwalk, in Connecticut, collected and preserved there by Mr. Arnold and sold by him to Governor Tryon for Sir Ashton's museum. Here, also, I saw Sir Ashton and some other knights, his friends, practising the ancient, but, as I thought, long forgotten art of archery. In his garden, with their bows and arrows, they hit as small a mark and at as great a distance as any of our sharp-shooters could have done with their rifles."

Let us allow him this hour or two of relaxation. His dynamo has been running steadily for forty-

eight years; rightly may it cool off for a moment.

On Wednesday, June 1, 1785, George Welf and John Adams stand face to face. Mr. Adams, of America, is ushered alone into the king's private room, in St. James's Palace. Mr. Adams, bowing to the less fortunate man, says:

"SIR: The United States of America have appointed me their minister plenipotentiary to your Majesty, and have directed me to deliver to your Majesty this letter which contains the evidence of it.

"It is in obedience to their express commands, that I have the honor to assure your Majesty of their unanimous disposition and desire to cultivate the most friendly and liberal intercourse between your Majesty's subjects and their citizens, and of their best wishes for your Majesty's health and happiness, and for that of your royal family.

"The appointment of a minister from the United States to your Majesty's Court will form an epoch in the history of England and of America. I think myself more fortunate than all my fellow-citizens, in having the distinguished honor to be the first to stand in your Majesty's royal presence in a diplomatic character. . . .

"And I shall esteem myself the happiest of men, if I can be instrumental in recommending my country

more and more to your Majesty's royal benevolence, and of restoring an entire esteem, confidence, and affection, or, in better words, the old good nature and the old good humor between people, who, though separated by an ocean, and under different governments [did the King wince at those three words?] have the same language, a similar religion, and kindred blood.

"I beg your Majesty's permission to add, that, although I have for some time been intrusted by my country, it was never in my whole life in a manner so agreeable to me. . . ."

Agreeable to him! What, under heaven or on earth, could possibly have been so agreeable!

The words echoed strangely in the spacious room, there at St. James's, and when he had finished speaking there must have been a silence for a moment, in which the man in royal garments tried to clear his throat of something that was sticking there, and his Secretary of State stood by in grave silence. One suddenly heard a tall clock, that had seemed to be noiseless, ticking, ticking. . . . Thus:

"The King listened to every word I said, with dignity, but with an apparent emotion. Whether it was the nature of the interview, or whether it was my

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visible agitation—for I felt more than I did or could express—that touched him, I cannot say. But he was much affected, and answered me with more tremor than I had spoken with, and said:

“SIR: The circumstances of this audience are so extraordinary . . . the language you have now held is so . . . extremely . . . proper . . . and the feelings you have discovered so justly adapted to the occasion, that I must say that I not only will receive with . . . pleasure . . . the assurances of the friendly dispositions of . . . the . . . United . . . States . . . but that I am very glad that the choice has fallen upon you to be their minister. . . .

“I wish you, Sir, to believe, and that it may be understood in America, that I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do, by the duty which I owed My people. I will be very frank with you: I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the . . . United . . . States . . . as an independent power. The moment I see such sentiment and language as yours prevail, and a disposition to give to this country the preference,

that moment I shall say, 'let the circumstances of language, religion, and blood, have their natural and full effect.'

Mr. Adams, profoundly moved, listened to the troubled words. "Although the King's pronunciation is as distinct as I ever heard, he hesitated some time between his periods—and between the members of the same period. . . . He was indeed much affected, and I confess I was not less so. . . ."

These speeches having been exchanged—

"And did you come here directly from France, Mr. Adams?"

"From France, Your Majesty."

The King laughs aloud. "There is," he says, smiling, "an opinion among some people that you are not the *most* attached of all your countrymen to the manners of France."

Mr. Adams is a bit surprised at this unexpected departure from what he himself has considered to be royal dignity and reticence. "I was a little embarrassed, but determined not to deny the truth on one hand, nor, on the other, leave him to infer from it any attachment to England. So I threw off as much gravity as I could, and, combining an air of gayety with a tone of decision, said:

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“That opinion, Sir, is not mistaken: I must avow to your Majesty, I have *no* attachment but to my own country.”

“An honest man,” exclaims George Welf, as quick as lightning, “will never have any other!”

Three years does Mr. Adams remain in England; years not all as pleasant as this first moment has been; but the job is done. In 1788 he returns home; in 1789, he, with George Washington, is elected to head the nation; for eight years he stands at Washington’s right hand, second only, in the nation’s first choice, to the man whom he created; and in 1797 he himself is chosen President. In 1799, the frigate *Constitution*, afterwards lovingly nicknamed “Old Ironsides,” lay a-building in Boston harbor, a part of this man Adams’s indefatigable efforts to build up a navy; “the *Constitution*,” he writes, as the moment of her maiden cruise draws near, “employs my thoughts by day and my dreams by night.” And on July 23, 1799, he adds, exulting:

“*The Constitution* took the advantage of a brisk breeze and went out of the harbor and out of sight this forenoon, making a beautiful and noble figure amidst the joy and good wishes of thousands. . . .”

Five months before the end of his four years as President, the White House in Washington being at last made ready for him, he enters it, in November, 1800, as its first occupant. . . .

The most important event in his four years in the Presidency is the imminence of a war with France. Actual sea-fights, by the score, do take place, though there is no actual declaration of war. The most selfishly ambitious man in America, Alexander Hamilton, moves heaven and earth to bring on actual war; but this man Adams stands firm, and, without sacrificing one atom of the nation's dignity, prevents that dreadful catastrophe. The pressure exerted upon him was implacable, tremendous. No chief magistrate, for sixty years to come, was to bear a crueller burden. Against all the machinations directed at his policy, he puts an end to the seemingly inevitable war by accepting the good faith of France and sending a diplomatic mission to treat with France. That act, he declares, "I wish to insert on my gravestone." (It will be put there, doubtless, if he ever dies; but that is unlikely.) "If we had escutcheons in this country, I would contrive to introduce it into mine. I would rather have it there than seventeen quarters of marquises and dukes, princes, kings, or emperors.

ESSAY ON HUNGER

I would not exchange it for the most splendid name
I have read in history. . . .”

These are the acts of this man Adams towards
foreign nations—acts which are living, breathing,
working, today.

WOLF-TAMER

"To place property at the mercy of a majority who have no property, is to entrust the lamb to the wolf. My *fundamental* maxim of government is: *Never* to trust the lamb to the custody of the wolf."

John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Brand-Hollis

"This kind of architecture, I find, is an art, or mystery; very difficult to learn, and still harder to practice."

John Adams, in a letter to Richard Rush

"**A**DAMS," says John Adams to his soul, "you and I shall have to restrain men *from robbing themselves*."

"Very good, sir," replies his confidant. "We shall do so!"

He is in middle life, not well-to-do, a wife and children dependent on him, his little property and even his life itself in danger of forfeiture; his wife is ill, and he wearing himself out with work and worry.

So he plunges into the greatest of all great works—the business of laying the foundations of a democratic nation.

There is a game, which idle persons sometimes play,

called, "What would I do if I had a million dollars?" Serious, and very wealthy, persons often play it, too, in dead earnest: for it is no easy thing to dispose of a million dollars sensibly. But there is an even more difficult game, one to which few persons give thought, though it can afford infinite amusement, and needs, for playing it, only a pencil and some sheets of paper: the game of "What would I do if I had to invent a government for a hundred million men and women?"

It is this kind of architecture that, as this man Adams says is "an art, or mystery; very difficult to learn, and harder still to practice."

He himself played this game for forty years in real earnest, in the sweat of agony. "It is a pretty amusement, is it not," he once asked, jokingly, "to play a game with nations as if they were fox-and-geese, or coins upon a checkerboard, or the personages at chess? But a sublime one, truly: enough to make a man serious, however addicted to sport. Politics is the *divine* science, after all. How is it possible that any man should ever think of making it subservient to his own little passions and mean private interests?" He himself certainly did not. He got out of it no such private rewards as "a fortune, a title, a gilded coach, a train of horses, a troop of

liveried servants." He got nothing, except the proper food for his soul: excitement. "I was plunged head-long in the American revolution from 1761 to 1798 (for it was all revolution during that whole period), and does any one think I trod upon feathers and slept upon beds of roses during that thirty-seven years?"

John Adams stands on a dizzy height, a height that few men will care to attempt. We all stand at its base, shuddering. His title is this: The most unpopular man in all the history of America. Why? Because he never rids himself of the habit of telling people the Truth. . . .

He says that human equality is nonsense. So it is. But it is literally more dangerous to say that than to betray one's nation. By the side of such a person, Benedict Arnold is forgotten. . . . Humanity can never forgive such a Truth-Speaker. Humanity invariably leaps to the conclusion that because one says that inequality exists, one therefor *approves* of inequality. You do not say to the doctor who tells you that you have a fever that it is he who is trying to kill you. Yet that is precisely what humanity always does to the man who tells it the truth about itself. A Christ must always be crucified. Trample upon him, as though he were a mad dog. . . .

WOLF-TAMER

This man Adams never takes sides, between the greedy rich and the greedy poor; and this, too, is a mistake on his part. He tells both sides, with equal frankness, that he despises their greedinesses, heartily; and therefore both sides fear him. If the majority can ever see that he *detests* inequality more fiercely than any man who ever lived, then, perhaps, they will place him where he rightly belongs in their hearts—above Washington, above Jefferson, above them all. . . .

In the meantime, whether they thank him or not, he may indulge himself in a quiet chuckle at the thought that all the Americans who have ever lived, all the men and women and children born in the last one hundred and fifty years—how many would that be? five hundred million?—have conducted, and are conducting, their affairs according to the lines he lays down for them. . . . He, more than any other, is the true Father of His Country; for he not only started it on its path—he perpetuates himself in every generation. All who buy and sell, pay their taxes, make investments, live and act, do so under this man Adams today. . . .

Look over his shoulder as he plays this fascinating new game, Nation-Building:

“The general discontents of nations are produced by the augmentation of the wealth and power of the wealthy.” He starts with this proposition. “The great and general extension of commerce has introduced such inequalities of property that the great class of “middling” people—that great and excellent portion of society upon whom so much of the liberty and prosperity of nations so greatly depends—is almost lost; and the two orders of Rich and Poor, only, remain. . . . The people find themselves burdened by the rich, and the power of arbitrary government now commonly wielded by the rich. The direct taxes laid by the government, largely to support armies and navies, and the indirect taxation which produces the immense revenues of the wealthy, must all be paid by the people. The few who think and see the progress and tendency of things have not been able to see any resource against this tendency but in the common people.”

When he has asserted these general propositions, he pauses for a moment to inquire if *liberty* is not what we are all striving for. He assumes that it is; and thereupon offers a definition of liberty:

The definition of liberty as “the power of doing whatever the laws permit,” meaning the civil laws, does not, he says, appear to be a satisfactory defini-

tion. He has two definitions to offer, as substitutes. One is that liberty is "a *self*-determining power in an intellectual agent." The other, that liberty is "the power to do as we would be done by."

His ambition is to establish a government that makes such liberty *imperative* upon all classes.

Before attempting to work out a plan for such a government, he (and you) inquires into the material with which any government must be built—namely, human nature. This man Adams does this and comes to conclusions on the subject of human nature that are astonishingly similar to those of the most modern psychologist, whoever that may be. Adams points out that the most powerful main-spring of human actions is *self-preservation*. The next most powerful, he asserts, is the desire of every human being *to surpass* some other person. This desire, he contends, is too deep-rooted ever to be eradicated by any means whatever. . . . He calls this deeply-rooted Wish "the desire for distinction." It shows itself, he says, in four forms, one of which is praiseworthy; the other three being dangerous to good government. The first form, which he terms *Emulation*, is simply the desire of one person to excel another by fair industry in the search of truth or the practice of honesty, generosity, courage, and such virtues. Its three vicious

forms, he classifies as being the *fear*, in one person, that another will become superior to him; the anger of one person at the superiority of another, coupled with the desire to drag that person down; and the delusion of a person that he is more important than he really is.

We have talked a great deal about *hunger* here; but we shall have to speak of it again. We shall have to quote this man Adams's observation on this particular form of hunger. "The desire of the esteem of others," he says, "is as real a want as hunger. . . ."

Now he goes on to say that in no country, however democratic, can *distinctions* ever be abolished. The world grows more enlightened, he admits. Knowledge is more equally diffused. Newspapers, magazines, and free libraries have made mankind wiser. Or at least, he adds, this is true in part. If all these books lead at last to *the insecurity of property*, nations will soon wish their books in ashes. But he has no real fear that this will happen. *Distinctions* still exist. Wealth and honors are not going out of fashion. "Is not the rage for them, on the contrary, increased faster than improvement in knowledge? As long as either of these are in vogue, will there not be emulations and rivalries? *There is no connection in the mind between science and these rivalries, by*

which the former can extinguish or diminish the latter."

And, he concludes, no matter how great are the improvements in the condition of the public, the great question will forever remain, *who shall work?* . . .

And thence he arrives at his whole system of government, expressing it in four hundred words. They are the most frankly truthful words ever uttered by any American statesman. They are so starkly, harshly candid that it seems inconceivable that any statesman would ever be so rash as to utter them. This man Adams says that as a result of them an immense unpopularity, with a roar like that of a skyscraper collapsing, suddenly fell upon him. What else does he expect? Here they are:

"Leisure for study must ever be the portion of the few.

"The number employed in government must forever be very small.

"Food, raiment, and habitations, the indispensable wants of all, are not to be obtained without the continual toil of ninety-nine in a hundred of mankind.

"As rest is rapture to the weary man, those who labor little will always be envied by those who labor much.

“With all the encouragements, public and private, which can ever be given to general education, and it is scarcely possible they should ever be too many or too great, the laboring part of the people can never be learned.

“The controversy between the rich and the poor, the laborious and the idle, the learned and the ignorant, distinctions as old as the Creation and as extensive as the globe, distinctions which no art or policy, no degree of virtue or philosophy can ever wholly destroy, will continue, and rivalries will spring out of them.

“These parties *must* be represented in the legislature, and *must* be balanced, or one will oppress the other. . . .

“There never will probably be found any other mode of establishing such an equilibrium, than by constituting the representation of each an independent branch of the legislature; and an independent executive authority, such as that in the United States, to be a third branch and a mediator or an arbitrator between them. *Property must be secured, or liberty cannot exist.* . . .

“But if unlimited or unbalanced power of disposing property be put into the hands of those who have

no property, it will be found that the lamb is committed to the custody of the wolf. . . .

"The great art of lawgiving consists in balancing the poor against the rich, in the legislature, and in constituting the legislative a perfect balance against the executive power, at the same time that no individual or party can become its rival. The essence of a free government consists in an effectual control of rivalries. . . .

"The executive and the legislative powers are natural rivals; and if each has not an effectual control over the other, the weaker will ever be the lamb in the paws of the wolf. . . ."

You will find all this in this man Adams's "Discourses on Davila," but you need not go to the trouble of reading the whole book; this is its kernel. A kernel from which springs the American government. . . .

Yet this is by no means all that he has to tell you, with his harsh frankness. If what he has just said seems to indicate a greater sympathy with the man of property as ranged alongside the man without, he has other truths to utter, elsewhere, equally as pungent.

"Take the first hundred men you meet in the

streets of a city, or on a turnpike road in the country, and constitute them a democratical republic. When this democratical republic meets, you will find half a dozen men of independent fortunes; half a dozen of more eloquence; half a dozen, with more learning; half a dozen with eloquence, learning, *and* fortune. Let me see. We have now four-and-twenty; to these we may add six more, who will have more artfulness, cunning, and intrigue, than learning, eloquence, or fortune; these will infallibly soon unite with the twenty-four. Thus we make thirty. The remaining seventy are composed of farmers, shopkeepers, merchants, tradesmen, and laborers. Now, if each of these thirty can, by any means, influence one vote beside his own, the whole thirty can carry sixty votes—a decided and uncontrolled majority of the hundred. By ‘aristocrats’ I mean these thirty; and they will infallibly convert your democracy of ONE HUNDRED into an aristocracy of THIRTY. Once for all, I give you notice, that whenever I use the word *aristocrat* I mean a citizen who can command or govern two votes or more in society, whether by his virtues, his talents, his learning, his loquacity, his taciturnity, his frankness, his reserve, his face, figure, eloquence, grace, air, attitude, movements, wealth,

birth, art, address, intrigue, good fellowship, drunkenness, debauchery, fraud, perjury, violence, treachery, religion or irreligion: for by every one of these instruments have votes been obtained and will be obtained. . . . *Property* has been, is, and everlastingly will be, a natural and unavoidable cause of aristocracy; God has made it such, by the constitution of human nature and the globe, the land, the sea, the air, the water, and the fire, among which he has placed it. . . .

"I remember the time when one thousand families depended on John Hancock, who employed the heads of those families, as workmen, for their daily bread: how many of the heads of those families would naturally be inclined to vote with and for Mr. Hancock? Could not Mr. Hancock command, or at least influence, one vote, besides his own? If he could, he was an aristocrat, according to my opinion. . . . You think the art of printing will abolish aristocracy. It is certain that property is aristocracy, and that property commands the press. . . . The types, the machinery, the office, the apprentices, the journeymen, require capital; and that capital is aristocracy . . . When you talk of the press as the protector of democracy and the suppressor of aristocracy, you are

committing the lamb to the kind guardianship and protection of the wolf! a hungry wolf! a starving wolf!"

Finally he summarizes his whole proposition: "When the people, who have no property, feel the power in their own hands to determine all questions by a majority, they ever attack those who have property; till the injured men of property lose all patience and recur to finesse, trick, and stratagem, to outwit those who have too much strength, because they have too many hands to be resisted any other way. Let us be impartial, then, and speak the whole truth. The multitude, therefore, as well as the 'nobles,' must have a check."

And having thus paid his respects to *both* sides, what has he to say about the final outcome of this inevitable struggle between property and no-property, in the operation of the American government, under the American Constitution?

"Under the American Constitution, the aristocratical power is greater than either the executive or the democratical. It will, therefore, swallow up the other two. . . ."

Oh, Mr. Adams! How *can* you say such things!

But even though he has said them, he is the man

who invented the system under which the United States is conducted today, as it has always been—namely, the Constitution of the United States. Madison, Hamilton, or John Marshall, or any other person, have not played as important a part in the formation of the Constitution as has this man Adams.

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In 1775, Virginia, like the others of the thirteen colonies that made up America, was without any self-constituted framework of government. On Friday, June 2, 1775, a letter from the provincial assembly of Massachusetts was laid before the Continental Congress, requesting the Congress to advise the colony on the subject of instituting a form of government. John Adams immediately rose and addressed the assembly.

He asserted that the nation must be formed and must probably consist of a confederacy of States, each of which would have to have its separate government. He asserted that the case of Massachusetts was undoubtedly the most urgent at the moment, but that it could not be long before each Colony must take steps to form its own government. And he urged Congress to recommend to the people of every Colony to call conventions immediately for the purpose of framing such constitution. To John Rut-

ledge, of South Carolina, and to John Sullivan, of New Hampshire, he said privately that he hoped that any government to be instituted would contain these fundamental features: a legislature of two branches, an upper and a lower; an executive authority independent of the legislature, the two branches of the legislature and the executive forming a check and balance of all three; and, above all, judges independent of both the legislature and the executive. He expounded this theory frequently to the two men in early June, 1775; and this is the verbal origin of the present system of government of the United States.

In October, 1775, at the request of the people of New Hampshire, the subject of constitutional conventions was resumed in Congress. For six or seven weeks the subject was brought up almost daily; and almost daily Mr. Adams took the floor to explain and defend the system which he had already outlined to Rutledge and Sullivan, and which he considers the ideal system. His plan was thus made verbally familiar to the representatives of all thirteen colonies and must inevitably have been taken into consideration when each of the thirteen later came to frame its own constitution.

While Mr. Adams was urging this plan on the

floor of the Congress, he was requested by Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, to outline the plan in writing. Accordingly, in a letter dated at Philadelphia, November 15, 1775, he does so.

This is the true date on which the present government of the United States was born. That letter is its certificate of birth.

But the letter does not remain as the only evidence of Adams's fatherhood. On an evening in January, 1776, two months after the writing of the letter, George Wythe, of Virginia, also a member of the Continental Congress, called on Adams, in Adams's rooms. Wythe, like Richard Henry Lee, asks Adams what plan of government he would institute or advise for any of the colonies. Adams explains his idea again, briefly, and Wythe is so impressed that he also, like Lee, asks Adams to put them down in writing for him. That night, after Wythe's departure, Adams begins to draft a form of government for a State, and finishes the draft the next morning. Wythe shows the letter to Lee; and they join in asking Adams for permission to publish it. The first edition, making a duodecimo pamphlet of twenty-eight pages, was immediately printed by John Dunlap, the Philadelphia publisher; and copies of it are still extant. It was entitled, "Thoughts on Government." Adams mailed a

copy of it to Patrick Henry, leader in the Virginia convention which was about to frame a constitution for that colony. Henry acknowledges it in a letter dated May 20, 1776. In this letter he says:

"It shall be my incessant study so to form our portrait of government that a kindred with New England may be discerned in it; and if *all* your excellencies cannot be preserved, yet I hope to retain so much of the likeness that posterity shall pronounce us descended from the same stock. I shall think perfection is obtained if we have *your* approbation."

In January, 1776, moreover, the delegates of North Carolina were authorized by the legislature of *that* colony to apply to Mr. Adams for his views of the nature of the government it would be proper to form. He gave them, repeating and amplifying the plan suggested in his pamphlet. And a letter of the same description was addressed to Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, of New Jersey, in answer to a similar application, made at the time of the formation the constitution in *that* State.

Within the next two years, all but three of the colonies had held conventions and framed their constitutions for government. All of these constitutions, with the exception of those of Pennsylvania and Georgia, contained Adams's plan as their essence.

And in the final plan adopted, these two states also modify their original plans to agree with Adams's.

The three exceptions, whose constitutions were still to be formed, were New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. New York eventually followed the Adams plan. Massachusetts postponed her constitutional convention till 1779.

On May 10, 1776, John Adams, assisted by his supporter from the first, Richard Henry Lee, forced through the national assembly a resolution calling upon each of the colonies to adopt, each for itself, some form of government suitable to the will of its inhabitants. For this Adams had fought steadily, for a whole year, under a steady stream of cursing by the thousands of colonists who still hoped that separation from England would not take place. The preamble, written by Adams, to this resolution and adopted on May 15, 1776, with the resolution itself, is a complete statement, in succinct form, of the Declaration of Independence, which it precedes by six weeks. Nothing was left to Jefferson to do, when it came to phrasing the later document, but to amplify this.

In the autumn of 1779, Massachusetts held her final convention for framing a constitution for the State. Mr. Adams was elected a member of the as-

THIS MAN ADAMS

sembly and at once named upon the committee to draft the constitution. He drafted the entire instrument and his plan was adopted in 1780 with slight modifications only. The Constitution of Massachusetts is thoroughly his work.

When the time arrived (in 1787) for the States to plan a constitution for the nation itself, that federal constitution, as John Adams had recommended from the first, in 1775, twelve years before, was based upon the essential principles underlying the constitutions of the thirteen States. . . .

ADAMS'S SHAPING OF THE CONSTITUTION

ADAMS, IN 1775

Let a full and free representation of the people be chosen for a House of Representatives. . . . Let the House choose [a small group of men] for a Senate. . . . A law may be made, by this Congress, leaving to the people the privilege of choosing their President and members of the Congress annually. . . .

Let the House and Senate, by joint ballot, choose the President . . . annually, triennially, or septennially, as you will.

THE CONSTITUTION, AS
ADOPTED, 1787

All legislative powers shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and the House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States. . . . The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the legislatures thereof,¹ for six years.

The executive power shall be vested in a President. . . . He shall hold his office during the term of four years . . . and be elected as follows: Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress. . . .

¹ The amendment providing for the direct election of Senators by the people was not adopted until 1913.

THIS MAN ADAMS

Let the President have command of the army, the militia, forts, &c.

Let all officers and magistrates, civil and military, be nominated and appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Let the judges, at least of the Supreme Court, be incapacitated by law from holding any share in the legislative or executive power; let their commissions be during good behavior, and their salaries ascertained and fixed by law.

Let the President, Senate, and the House, be each a distinct and independent branch of the Legislature, and have a negative on all laws.

The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, and of the militia of the several States. . . .

He shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for. . . .

The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as Congress may from time to time establish. The judges, both of the Supreme and inferior courts, shall hold their offices during good behavior, and shall at stated times receive a compensation which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office. . . .

All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives, but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments, *as on other bills.*

WOLF-TAMER

A LEGISLATURE, AN EXECUTIVE, AND A JUDICIAL POWER COMPREHEND THE WHOLE OF WHAT IS MEANT BY GOVERNMENT.

IT IS BY BALANCING EACH OF THESE POWERS AGAINST THE OTHER TWO, THAT THE EFFORTS IN HUMAN NATURE TOWARDS TYRANNY CAN ALONE BE CHECKED AND RESTRAINED, AND ANY DEGREE OF FREEDOM PRESERVED IN THE CONSTITUTION.

(Signed)

Your friend and humble
servant,

JOHN ADAMS

15 November, 1775

Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he approve, he shall sign it, but if not, he shall return it, with his objections, to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the objections at large in their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such reconsideration two-thirds of that House shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered; and if approved by two-thirds of that House it shall become a law. Etc. . . .

(Signed)

"WE, THE PEOPLE OF
THE UNITED STATES,"
etc., etc.

17 September, 1787

It is the common practice to assert that the Federal Constitution owes its adoption chiefly to the writings of James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, in the series of papers known as *The Federalist*. During the sessions of the constitution-making convention of 1787, John Adams was abroad, as Minister to England. But while there he wrote a work in three volumes, under the title, "A Defence of the [State] Constitutions of Government in the United States." The first volume, printed in London, arrived in the United States as the Federal constitution-making assembly began its work. Three new editions were immediately printed, in Boston, in New York, and in Philadelphia; and the book, much circulated among the members of the convention, undoubtedly influenced the opinions of the assembly. Not only did Adams's opinions influence the members themselves, but they influenced the authors of *The Federalist* papers and thus influenced the general public to the support of his plan of government. The world's history can supply no more striking example of the power of a man's mind. It was not necessary for this man Adams to be present in person—he dominated the assembly, from a distance of three thousand miles, in the most important action ever undertaken by the United States.

The contemporary testimony of Richard Henry Lee, who had been with him in this fight from the first, since its inception in 1775, cannot be bettered. Lee, in a letter dated September 3, 1787, says that on his arrival at the convention he read Adams's volume and asserts that it "reached America at a great crisis." "Your labor," says Lee, "may therefore have its reward in the thanks of this and future generations." He predicts (what actually happened) that the convention would adopt for the national government the system of triple and mutually balancing powers which Adams explained to him for the first time in that letter of November 15, 1775. . . .

"The movement for the Constitution," concludes Charles A. Beard, in his "Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States," "was originated and carried through principally by four groups of personalty interests which had been adversely affected under the Articles of Confederation: (1) money; (2) public securities; (3) manufactures; (4) trade and shipping.

"The first firm steps toward the formation of the Constitution were taken by a small and active group of men immediately interested through their personal possessions in the outcome of their labors.

"No popular vote was taken directly or indirectly on the proposition to call the Convention which drafted the Constitution.

"A large propertyless mass was, under the prevailing suffrage qualifications, excluded at the outset from participation (through representatives) in the work of framing the Constitution.

"The members of the Philadelphia Convention which drafted the Constitution were, with a few exceptions, immediately, directly, and personally interested in, and derived economic advantages from, the establishment of the new system.

"The Constitution was essentially an economic document based upon the concept that the fundamental private rights of property are anterior to government and morally beyond the reach of popular majorities. . . .

"The Constitution was not created by 'the whole people,' as the jurists have said; neither was it created by 'the states,' as Southern nullifiers long contended; but it was the work of a consolidated group whose interests knew no state boundaries and were truly national in their scope."

The same may be said of the Declaration of Independence, and of the men who put their signatures

to that paper, drawn up by Thomas Jefferson upon the foundations suggested by John Adams.

Eight of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration were subsequently members of the Convention framing the Constitution (which had fifty-two attending members) and the large majority of the Signers were, like the Constitution-makers, men of considerable property or directly represented men of property. *All* are jealous guardians of property rights.

Half of their number were merchants and farmers, to whom guarantees of the rights of contract and to hold lands were vital; the other half were lawyers, whose paying business it was to guard these rights of their clients.

Of the Constitution's provisions, Beard says: "These are the great powers conferred on the new government: taxation, war, commercial control, and disposition of western lands. . . . The remaining powers are minor, and need not be examined here. . . . None of the powers conferred by the Constitution permits a direct attack on property. . . ." And "equally important to personalty as the positive powers conferred upon Congress . . . were the restrictions imposed on the states. . . . Two small clauses embody the chief demands of personalty

against agrarianism: the emission of paper money is prohibited, and the states are forbidden to impair the obligation of contract. . . . Contracts are to be safe, and whoever engages in a financial operation, public or private, may know that state legislatures cannot destroy overnight the rules by which the game is played. A principle of deep significance is written in these two brief sentences. The economic history of the states between the Revolution and the adoption of the Constitution is compressed in them. They appealed to every money lender, to every holder of public paper, to every man who had any personalty at stake. . . .”

These are the great *desires* lying behind, and responsible for, the Declaration of Independence and they are the *desires* incorporated in the document written in 1775 by John Adams—the document which supplied the model for States and for the Federal Government.

John Adams’s favorite motto, he once said, is that line of Vergil’s: “My bees make honey for others, not for me.”

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The Constitution, it is said, came into life under the hands of John Marshall, the great Chief Justice of the United States whose interpretations of the

Constitution fix its operation today. Let us agree with this saying.

But who made John Marshall?

Copy of a letter written in the White House:

“Washington, 31 January, 1801.

“To S. Dexter, Secretary of War:

DEAR SIR: I hereby authorize and request you to execute the office of Secretary of State so far as to affix the seal of the United States to the inclosed commission to the present Secretary of State, John Marshall, of Virginia, to be Chief Justice of the United States, and to certify in your own name on the commission as executing the office of Secretary of State *pro hac vice*.

JOHN ADAMS.”

And of John Marshall's reply:

“4 February, 1801.

“SIR: I pray you to accept my grateful acknowledgements for the honor conferred on me in appointing me Chief Justice of the United States. This additional and flattering mark of your good opinion has made an impression on my mind which time will not efface.

THIS MAN ADAMS

"I shall enter immediately on the duties of the office, and hope never to give you occasion to regret having made this appointment. . . ."

"With the most respectful attachment, etc.,

JOHN MARSHALL."

.
This man Adams appointed Washington. He appointed Jefferson. He appointed Marshall. He has a *knack* of fatherhood. . . .

.
Adams's crime is that he *knows* all men to be greedy—all men, the poor as well as the rich—and tells them so, to their faces. . . . Adams's triumph is that he has devised the best means so far devised, to restrain them from their greediness; the Federal Constitution. They may crucify him for his crime, to their hearts' content; and still he has his quiet chuckle to himself. . . .

For the continent that stretches from West Quoddy Head, in Maine, to Cape Alva, in Washington, is a mighty expanse; and the hundred million people who occupy it are a mighty nation. John Adams *lives*, in it. He holds the pencil that takes down your order in a million grocery shops. He holds the pen that makes your signature on a million contracts. His is the seal affixed to each of a million transfers of

WOLF-TAMER

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real estate, a million deeds of sale. In ten million stores and shops and offices he moves about each day, giving each one of us assurance that no man shall take from us what is Ours, whether that is a factory or a farm, a fortune, or a feather in the cap. And in twenty million homes, all over that great expanse, he lights each night a lamp that shines in safety and in peace.

He holds *the wolves* in iron chains.



*Four*

DEATH-RIGHTS



#### WHICH STATESMAN IS FRANKER?

WE are making progress toward social peace and contentment," said Herbert Hoover, campaigning for the Presidency, in a speech delivered at Newark, September 17, 1928. . . . "It is idle to argue that there are no longer any conflicts of interest between employee and employer. But there are wide areas of activity in which their interest should coincide."

THE controversy between the rich and the poor," says this man Adams today, "distinctions which no art or policy, no degree of virtue or philosophy can ever wholly destroy will continue. . . . Those who labor little will always be envied by those who labor much. . . . The great art of lawgiving consists in balancing the poor against the rich. . . . Property has been, is, and everlastingly will be, a natural and unavoidable cause of the ability to control votes. . . . I remember the time when one thousand families depended on John Hancock, who employed the heads of those families as workmen, for their daily bread: how many of the heads of those families would naturally be inclined to vote with and for Mr. Hancock?"



*Photo by Ewing Galloway, N. Y.*





## ESSAY ON DYNAMITE

“**D**YNAMITE,” said this man Adams, with a grin, one morning when I had dropped in to see him, “hadn’t been invented when I was a youngster. But I’ve always been interested in something that’s *just* as well worth treating gently.”

“What is that?” I asked.

“The discussion of riches and poverty,” chuckled Mr. Adams.

The subject seemed harmless enough, to me, and I said so. But Mr. Adams shook his head vigorously.

“Leave it alone!” he said, emphatically. “Don’t touch it! You don’t know the meaning of the word trouble! Fool around a buzz-saw, if you want to; pick up a redhot stove, if you must; stand around behind an ornery mule, if you crave excitement; but *don’t* get on the subject of riches and poverty! It’s too serious. Nobody can see anything funny in *that* subject.”

I saw that he was in a mood to talk.

“My only interest in money, or the lack of it,”

said he, "is its effect on government. You may have gathered that I'm considerably interested in government. . . .

"Well, when I was in London, Tom Jefferson came around to see me one evening in Grosvenor Square. We had a very entertaining chat. This was in 1784 or '5. In the course of the conversation, I said carelessly that I wished I could find time and means to write something upon Aristocracy. Tom seized on the idea and encouraged me to do it. He was very friendly and warm about it. I soon began; and kept up writing on that subject for thirty years. But, for some reason or other, *I never could make myself understood*, at the time. But I think I know why, now. It was because I didn't use the right word."

"Wasn't aristocracy the word to use?"

"It certainly wasn't! That was where I made my mistake, so far as the general public was concerned. *They* thought I meant to approve of ranks, hereditary titles, and all that. Well, you can imagine how popular *that* idea was, in those days! And the rest, the influential families, were just as indignant, but I imagine, for a very different reason. *They* were smart enough to see very well what I was driving at, and it didn't please them at all. So *they* did what they could to bottle me up. Between rich and poor I

was as popular as an undertaker at a garden-party. I think, if I had those thirty years of writing to do over, I would use a different word."

"And that is?"

"I'm not quite sure. You have a good one now, but it may not last. That's *bloc*. Another one is *minorities*. I don't know, yet, exactly what word to use. Bosses? That's not just what I mean. 'Special Interests'? 'Vested Interests'? Anarchists? Yes, that's pretty close to it. How would The Greedy suit? Well, suppose we say, while we're waiting for the right word, the Selfish. That's as near as I can come to it."

He chuckled again. "That's a great word for *me* to pick!" he exclaimed. "When I've been driven all my life by Self!

"But never mind. Now listen. Everything that I'm going to say now, I've said before. Only, in place of the word Aristocracy I'll put the words The Selfish. . . .

"The Selfish are the most difficult animals to manage of any thing in the whole theory and practice of government.

"They will *not* suffer themselves to be governed! (Anarchists, of a sort, you see.) They not only exert all their subtility, industry, and courage, but *they employ the common people* to knock to pieces every

plan and model that the most honest architects in legislation can invent to keep them within bounds.

"And the Selfish, whether rich or poor, are as furiously determined to get their way as the workmen of England were, when labor-saving machinery was first introduced, to demolish the machinery.

"But who are these Selfish? Who can judge? Who shall select these choice spirits from the rest of the congregation? Themselves? We must find out and determine. Xenophon says that the religious congresses of three thousand years back always chose the worst men they could find, because no others would do their dirty work. This wicked motive, power at all costs, is worse than high birth or wealth.

"There's a good old proverb, 'The meanest-blooded pup in the world, if he gets a little money, is as good a man as the best of them.' Yet birth and wealth, when combined, have prevailed over ability and talent in all ages of history.

"Tom Jefferson's remark was a fine one: that the Liberal and the Conservative are *biological* specimens. Inequalities of mind and body are established in birth. No treatment or system of government can ever plane them down to a level. I have never read reasoning more absurd, sophistry more gross, than the labors of those who seek to prove the natural equality of

mankind. The golden rule, 'do as you would be done by,' is *all* the equality that can be supported by reason or common sense. . . .

"I had this idea of writing something upon Aristocracy, but I was restrained for years by many fearful considerations. Among these, the one that influenced me most was that I knew such theories would give offence to many, if not all, of my best friends in America, and, very probably, destroy all the little popularity I ever had in a country where popularity has more omnipotence than any other force you may mention. Then, too, what publisher or bookseller would undertake to print or sell such hazardous writings? They are dynamite, I tell you!

"But I cannot keep away from this subject, the accident of birth, the power of the born-lucky. Philosophers and politicians may nibble and quibble, but they never will get rid of it. Their only resource is to control it. Wealth is another monster to be subdued. But Hercules himself could not subdue both or either. . . .

"Let me quote you some more wise words, which I have translated from a great old philosopher:

" 'Nor does a woman disdain to be the wife of a bad rich man. Nay, she *prefers* a man of property before a good man; for riches are honored, and a good man

marries a wife from a bad family, and a bad man marries into a good family. This does wealth mingle good blood and bad.'

"Now, please to tell me, whether historian can paint the picture of every city, county, or State, in our pure, uncorrupted, unadulterated, uncontaminated federal republic in more precise lines or colors than these?

"My friend, who are the lucky Selfish? Philosophers may answer, 'the wise and good.' But the world, mankind, have, by their practice, always answered, 'the rich, the beautiful, and the well-born.'

"What chance have talents and honest abilities in competition with wealth and birth and beauty?

"The five pillars of the Selfish are beauty, wealth, birth, genius, and ability. Any one of the three first can, at any time, overbear any one or both of the two last.

"I recently read a book whose whole point was that an aristocracy of bankers and bondholders is as bad as the nobility of France or England were. I most assuredly will not controvert that contention.

"Why do I think of Plato just now? Because no man ever expressed so much terror at the power of birth. His genius could invent no remedy or precaution against it, but a community of wives, a confusion of



families, a total extinction of all relations of father, son, and brother. . . .

"And yet, as I think of Plato's imaginary republic, I know that nothing can be conceived more destructive of human happiness, more infallibly designed to transform men and women into brutes, yahoos, or demons, than a community of wives and property.

"I, like Plato, tremble at the power of the Selfish. But we shall have to devise a better system. . . .

"Yet, in what are the writings of Rousseau and Helvetius wiser than those of Plato? 'The man who first fenced a tobacco yard, and said, This is *mine*, ought instantly to have been put to death,' says Rousseau. 'The man who first pronounced the barbarous word *God* ought to have been immediately destroyed,' says Diderot. In short, philosophers, ancient and modern, appear to me as mad as . . . Christians. No doubt they would all think *me* mad, and for any thing I know, this globe may be the Bedlam, the mad-house, of the universe. . . .

"After all, as long as property exists, it will accumulate in individuals and families. As long as marriage exists, knowledge, property, and influence will accumulate in families. The equal partition of the estates of those who die without making wills, as is the law in some states, instead of preventing will in

time augment the evil—if it is one. The French revolutionists saw this and were so far consistent. When they burned pedigrees and genealogical trees, they annihilated, as far as they could, marriages; knowing that marriage, among a thousand others things, was an infallible source of Selfishness.

“I repeat it, so sure as the idea and the institution of *property* is admitted and established in society, accumulations of it will be made,—the snowball will grow as it rolls.

“Cicero wrote two volumes of Discourses on Government, in which, we may presume, he fully examined and supported the communistic theories of Plato’s Laws and Republic. But these two volumes have been carefully destroyed, *not improbably with the general consent of philosophers, politicians, and priests*. The loss is as much to be regretted as any production of antiquity. . . .

“The fundamental article of my political creed is that despotism, or unlimited sovereignty, or absolute power, is the same in a majority of a popular assembly, an aristocratical council, an oligarchical junto, and a single emperor—equally arbitrary, cruel, bloody, and in every respect diabolical.

“Awakenings and revivals of religion always attend

## ESSAY ON DYNAMITE

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the most cruel extremities of anarchy, despotism, and civil war. You and I should be convinced that 'anarchy is better than tyranny, because it is of shorter duration,' if we did not know that anarchy is always followed by a more permanent despotism.

"A tyrannical government sponsors conditions such that it resembles a great, rich, powerful slave-owner who instructs his overseers in this fashion: 'You are to have no regard for the health, strength, comfort, natural affections, or moral feelings, or intellectual endowments of my slaves. You are only to consider what subsistence to allow them, and what labor to exact of them will subserve my interest. According to the most accurate calculation I can make, the proportion of subsistence and labor which will get six years of work out of them before they are done for, on the average, is the most profitable. And this allowance is surely very humane; for we estimate the lives of our coal-heavers upon an average of only two years, and our fifty thousand girls of the town at three years at most.'

"Oh! my fellow-citizens, that I had the voice of an archangel to warn you against these detestable principles: 'The world was not made for you; you were made for the world.' Be content with your own

*rights*; never usurp those of others; and what would not be the merit and the fortune of a nation that would thus never do nor permit wrong?

"I would define liberty to be a power to do *as we would be done by*. The definition of liberty to be the power of doing 'whatever the laws permit,' meaning the civil laws, does not appear to be satisfactory. . . .

"The strict definition of a republic is, that in which the sovereignty resides in more than one man. There are, in strictness of speech and in the soundest technical language, democratical and aristocratical republics, as well as an infinite variety of mixtures of both. I happened once in writing hastily, to drop the phrase, 'The word republic, as it is used, may signify any thing, every thing, or nothing.' For this frankness I have been pelted for twenty or thirty years with as many stones as were ever thrown at any martyr. But the assertion is literal, strict, solemn truth. There *are* monarchical, democratical, *and aristocratical* republics.

"Will you tell me how to prevent riches from becoming the effects of temperance and industry? Will you tell me how to prevent riches from producing luxury? Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, extravagance, vice and folly?

## ESSAY ON DYNAMITE

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"When you answer me these questions, I hope I may venture to answer yours. . . ."

I hadn't asked any questions. But what he had said was making me attempt a definition built up from his own ideas:

*Good* government, then, thinks Adams, is merely the structure that provides the most practical method of arranging for large numbers of men and women to get along together with the least possible amount of quarreling.

Quarrels arise in almost every, if not *every*, instance from selfishness. This means that there is selfishness on both sides of the quarrel: for even if one party to the quarrel is resisting an attempt to wrong him, his resistance is based on selfishness. His is undoubtedly a good sort of selfishness, but it is selfishness none the less.

Selfishness concerns itself entirely with *property*—*my* wife, *my* child, *my* land, *my* business, *my* ambition.

The chief, the only, business of Government, therefore, is to see to it that the Selfishness of no one person, or group of persons, is permitted to do harm to the legitimate Selfishness of any other person.

And, in addition to the frame of government, the constitution, that makes such guardianship possible,

the government must be eternally watchful that no person, or group of persons, either quietly or noisily, violates those rights.

And, again in addition, the public must eternally *watch* the government as well as its own members. . . .

All this may seem based upon a very cynical view of human nature. Yet, until human nature changes, it is the only possible view.

The business of a statesman is to devise such a government. Since its success is based on human nature, he must, therefore, be a student of human nature. He must know all that there is to be known of biology; of the psychology of the individual and of crowds; of the ethics of business men; of the tactics of the ambitious; of the ethics of employers and the ethics of employes.

Mr. Adams chuckled. "You have left out just one thing," he said. "What is 'legitimate' Selfishness?"

I looked at him to answer his own question.

"When I was twenty-six," he observed, "just a green youngster who had been practicing law only two or three years, I had the supreme good fortune to hear that marvelous speech that had more to do with the birth of American independence, I suppose, than any other one thing—the argument delivered

## ESSAY ON DYNAMITE

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by James Otis against the Writs of Assistance. To me, that day, he seemed almost a demi-god. Some of the things he said are indelibly printed on my mind, long as it has been since that day.

"He asserted that every man, at the creation of the world, was an independent sovereign; subject to no law, but the law written on his heart. His right to his life, his liberty, no created being could rightfully contest. Nor was his right to his property less incontestable. The club that he had snapped from a tree, for a staff or for defence, was his own. His bow and arrow were his own; if, by a pebble, he had killed a partridge or a squirrel, it was his own. No creature, man or beast, had a right to take it from him. If he had taken an eel, or a smelt, or a sculpin, it was his property. In short, Otis sported upon this topic with so much wit and humor, and at the same time so much indisputable truth and reason, that he was not less entertaining than instructive.

"He asserted that these rights were inherent and inalienable. That they never could be surrendered except by idiots or madmen, and all the acts of idiots and lunatics are void, anyway, and not obligatory, by all the laws of God and man.

"Nor was slavery forgotten. No one ever asserted the rights of the enslaved in stronger terms. Young



## THIS MAN ADAMS

as I was, and ignorant as I was, I shuddered at the doctrine he taught; and I have all my life-time shuddered, *and still shudder*, at the consequences that may be drawn from these premises.

"Because, God help me, I have a *logical* mind, and I cannot but see the inevitable conclusion that must follow from premises that are true!

*"Shall we say, that the rights of masters and servants clash, and can be decided only by force?"*

When he had got to this question, loaded as it is with high-explosive, this man Adams stopped, and sat silent, brooding. And if ever there was a countenance in which was written grave concern and foreboding of cataclysmic revolution it was his. . . .

"If change must come," he said at last, slowly, gravely, "I have always advocated that change be brought about by legal processes. *But who shall decide* how fast or how slowly these changes shall be made?"

And again he was silent, for a long moment.

"I sincerely believe," he said at last, as if speaking to himself, "that Mr. Otis was the earliest and the principal founder of *one* of the greatest political revolutions that have ever occurred among men."

Then he drew a deep breath, shook his head as if

trying to brush away some disturbing thought, and said loudly:

"I believe, however, that the distinction of *rich* and *poor*, however odious and pernicious it may be rendered at particular junctures, will never be done away with, as long as some men are taller and others shorter, some wiser and others sillier, some more virtuous and others more vicious, some richer and others poorer. The distinction is grounded on the *unalterable* nature of humanity. . . . And woe will be to that Country which supinely suffers malicious demagogues to excite jealousies, foment prejudices, and stimulate animosities between them!"

I fancied I caught the faintest shadow of a wink as he concluded this stirring speech. And he added, whimsically:

"I *adore* that religion which teaches us to live, as much as possible, peaceably with all men; yet, it is impossible to be at peace with injustice and cruelty, with fraud and violence, with despotism, anarchy, and impiety. The field of battle, at once, is infinitely preferable to a course of perpetual and unlimited *contribution*. . . ."

I laughed.

"Oh," he said, hastily, "I was talking about a pos-

sible war with a foreign power, when I said that!"

"Upon what does the prosperity of every nation rest?" he resumed. "Different ages and different groups will answer that in different ways. Christians in general might say that the entire prosperity of a nation depends on the religious observance of the sabbath. The lawyers say that it depends on a government of laws and not of men. Philosophers who reflect most deeply will say that wealth and power are not prosperity and that pure prosperity depends on pure honesty. The American farmer says, at this day, the entire prosperity of the nation depends on agriculture. The business men of America say that it depends on commerce. In Prussia, they used to say that the entire prosperity of every state depends on the discipline of its armies. But, my friend, let me observe to you that the old theory that the one reliance of a nation is its military strength is a principle which will not succeed in this age, either in America or Europe.

"That was true enough, once. But commerce, *business*, has produced an entire revolution in the sentiments of mankind. . . ."

## MISCHIEF

MEN have ascribed all sorts of attributes, mostly mean, to this man Adams; I can see only his *heat*—molten, incandescent, awful, ageless and universal, like the sun's. . . .

He is born a Me-Person and he goes on being a Me-Person. Who else does?

But if you are a Me-Person, if you admit to yourself, *as you should*, "I am the most important thing to Me," you may be sure that one fine day you will be struck by a very pleasant thought. "Say," you will exclaim, startled, "Some day there isn't going to be any more Me!"

To a true Me-Person, what could be more disturbing? No more *Me!* Is it pleasant? Is it ghastly? Or is it not fascinating?

John Adams amuses himself with thinking steadily on this subject. Frightened by it? Not a bit! Don't you, by this time, know better than to think anything on heaven or earth can frighten this fellow?

An intimate friend of the great Dr. Samuel John-

son tells this man Adams that Johnson died in agonies or horror of *annihilation*. And Adams exclaims stoutly:

"Dread of annihilation? Dread of *nothing*? A dread of *nothing*, I should think, would be no dread at all. . . . *Can* there be any real, substantial, rational fear of *nothing*?"

Religions are founded on fear, this fear that *Me* will suffer by death. . . . John Adams has no such fear. And therefore, as he says himself, he has no "religion."

He says, calmly, that if he had been standing with Moses on Mount Sinai, and, while witnessing that descent of God to the mountain top, had there been told by God Himself that one was three and three was one, he might not have had the courage to deny it, but he could not have believed it. Whatever he might have said with his lips at that moment, he knows that in his heart it would be a lie.

He quotes the clergyman: "'God's presence is as extensive as space. What is space? An infinite spherical *vacuum*. He created this speck of dirt and the human species for his glory; and with the deliberate design of making nine tenths of our species miserable for ever for his glory.' This is the doctrine of Christian theologians, in general, ten to one. Now, my friend,

can prophecies or miracles convince you or me that infinite benevolence, wisdom, and power, created, and preserves for a time, innumerable millions, to make them miserable for ever, for his own glory? . . . I believe no such things. . . . Howl, snarl, bite, ye Calvinistic, ye Athanasian divines,' if you will; ye will say I am no Christian; I say ye are no Christians, and there the account is balanced. . . ."

He adds: The character and doctrines of Christ have received still greater injury from those who pretend to be his special disciples, and who have disfigured and twisted his actions and precepts from views of personal interest, with the result that they have caused the *unthinking* part of mankind to throw off the whole system in disgust. . . .

He even asserts that he rejoices in the doctrines of Voltaire and other philosophers of the same candor. Why? "Because I believe they have done more than even Luther or Calvin . . . to propagate religious liberty."

In short, as may be perceived from the numberless assertions of his, this man Adams attended the prosecution of Science by the citizens of Tennessee in the village of Dayton during the summer of 1925, and sat, though unseen, in the benches occupied by the attorneys for the defence. His contention is that Sci-

ence can arrive at the truth concerning God and the universe without any help from religions of any sort. . . . "Philosophy, which is the result of reason, is the first, the original revelation of the Creator to his creature, man. When this revelation is clear and certain, by intuition or necessary inductions, no subsequent revelation, *supported by prophecies or miracles*, can supersede it. . . . Philosophy looks with an impartial eye on *all* terrestrial religions. . . ."

Religious sects do not have this impartiality, he finds. "One party reads the newspapers and pamphlets of its own church, and interdicts all writings of the opposite complexion. The other party condemns all such as heresy, and will not read, or suffer to be read, as far as its influence extends, any thing but its own libels." To economists such as Voltaire, he gives a gratuitous tip. They fail, he says, because they have not the common sense to see that people cannot be brought overnight to believe in their philosophy—they fail, he points out, to consider *the force of early education on the minds of millions*.

What is his recipe for a university? Jefferson has asked him for it. Adams's first impulse is to reply that the true university should teach all sciences, to the exclusion of metaphysics and theology. But his second thought improves on this first one, and he sets



down words well worthy of being written in stone above the gates of every university:

"But knowing the eager impatience of the human mind to search into eternity and infinity, the first cause and last end of all things, I think it best to leave it its *liberty to inquire*. . . ."

Hotly does he hate intolerance, of whatever sort, or wherever it may appear. When he is a boy, he overhears a conversation between his schoolteacher and a clergyman. The schoolteacher is a fanatic, the clergyman is not. The schoolteacher exclaims, "Oh, if I were only a monarch, I would have in my dominions only *one* religion!" And Adams quotes with gusto the clergyman's quiet reply: "Cleverly, you would be the best man in the world, *if you had no religion*."

When Adams is sixty, he begins to have leisure; and for thirty years he reads every volume upon religion, the religions of all the world, that he can lay his hands upon. When he has finished them all he exclaims: "And all to what purpose? I verily believe I was as wise and good seventy years ago as I am now. . . . The vast prospect of mankind, which these books have passed in review before me, has sickened my very soul. . . . From the botton of my

soul I pity my fellowmen. Fears and terrors appear to have produced a universal credulity. Fears of calamities in life, and punishments after death, seem to have possessed the souls of all men. . . . How it is possible that mankind should submit to be governed as they have been, is to me an inscrutable mystery. . . . *If* I were a Calvinist, I might pray that God, by a miracle of divine grace, would instantly convert a whole contaminated nation from turpitude to purity; but even in this I should be inconsistent, for the fatalism of Mahometans, Materialists, Atheists, Pantheists, and Calvinists, and Church of England articles, appears to me to render all prayer futile and absurd. . . .”

The great right of humanity, “liberty to inquire,” is what he is now fighting for. No one has ever called him a scientist, but he is one, and a great one. Theories which he advanced, but had no leisure to develop, a century ago, are but now beginning to be verified. “Animal life is a *chemical* process. It is carried on by unceasing motion. Our bodies *and minds*, like the heavens, the earth, and the sea, like all animal, vegetable, and mineral nature, like the elements of earth, air, fire, and water, are continually changing. . . . Herschel, with his new glass, has opened up the most

magnificent prospect that ever was seen or imagined. If all those single, double, triple, quadruple worlds are peopled as fully as every leaf and drop in this, what a merry company there is of us in the universe, all fellow-creatures, insects, animalcules, and all! Why are we kept so unacquainted with each other? . . . Iron has a sympathy with magnetism and electricity which should be examined by every experiment which ingenuity can devise. . . . Electrically magnetized iron is in possession of the most remarkable, wonderful, and mysterious property in nature. This substance is the secret of the whole globe. . . . It must have a sympathy with the whole globe. . . . This metal called iron may one day reveal the secrets of nature. . . . The primary springs of nature may be too subtle for all our senses and faculties. . . .”

His logic once drove him to the conclusion that the universe, as distinct from “God,” is both infinite and eternal. . . .

But he is well aware of the dangers which scientific inquiry encounters in its restless search. “We think ourselves possessed, or at least we boast that we are so, of liberty of conscience on all subjects, and of the right of free inquiry and private judgment in all cases,” he writes. “And yet how far are we from these exalted privileges *in fact!* There exists, I believe,

throughout the whole Christian world, a law which makes it blasphemy to deny or to doubt the divine inspiration of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation. In most countries of Europe it was punished, even into the nineteenth century, by fire at the stake, or the rack, or the wheel. In England itself, to that date, it was punished by boring through the tongue with a red-hot poker. In America it is not much better; even in Massachusetts . . . a law was made at the latter end of the eighteenth century, repealing the cruel punishments of the former laws, but substituting fine and imprisonment upon all those blasphemers upon any book of the Old Testament or New. Now, what free inquiry, when a writer must surely encounter the risk of fine or imprisonment for adducing any argument for investigation into the divine authority of those books? . . . When or where has existed a Protestant or dissenting sect who would tolerate A FREE INQUIRY? . . . Touch a solemn truth in collision with a dogma of a sect, though capable of the clearest proof, and you will soon find you have disturbed a nest from which hornets will swarm about your legs and hands and fly into your face and eyes."

Mr. Adams, I have the honor to inform you that

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you are treading on the most dangerous ground of all. What do you mean by speaking such thoughts aloud? Is this any way to go about to obtain the respect and veneration of your state of Massachusetts, or of the United States? Do you think that *your* portrait will be framed and hung in school-rooms, for little children to gaze at in admiration, if you continue to voice such treasons? What, do you only laugh? Will you never grow weary of fighting for liberties, and must you go on now to fight for this *liberty to inquire?*

Very well, then. I wash my hands of you. It will do you no good, John, to be saying, as you are saying now, "My religious creed has, for fifty or sixty years, been contained in four short words—'Be just and good.' " Your spirit is nothing so meek as all that. You are eternally a rebel, an agitator; a man who says, 'If there is no precedent, it is high time that a precedent should be set.' Your exact words are these:

"Have I not been employed in mischief all my days?"











